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**Headteachers' Perspectives on Managing Student Voice Activity:
*Power; Purpose; Participation; Potential.***

Doctor of Education (Ed.D)

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Declaration and Word Count

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own. Where the work of other researchers has been referred to, this is explicitly cited in the body of the text to which it has been drawn upon. In addition a reference section states clearly the publication to which that reference came from.

I also declare that no part of the material has previously been submitted for any other degree or qualification.

Total word count (inclusive of references, abstract and acknowledgements): 58,106

Peter Copcutt

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Abstract

This study argues that headteachers draw upon a conceptual framework – based on power, purpose, participation and potential – in order to successfully manage student voice activity in their schools.

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, published in 1989, gives children who are capable of forming their own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting them. The following two decades witnessed a number of initiatives and legal instruments which enshrined this principle. In the context of schools, headteachers now have to manage this expressing of views and involvement in decision making in the form of ‘student voice activity’. However, no explicit frameworks exist for headteachers to draw upon in the management of student voice activity in schools. Therefore, the research reported in this thesis asked what implicit frameworks did headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity.

A pilot study in one school – a questionnaire about student voice activity followed up by a semi-structured interview with a headteacher – hinted that the categories of power, purpose, participation and potential had some role to play in the implicit framework headteachers draw upon for managing student voice activity. A critical literature review revealed several complicated propositions regarding the categories of power, purpose, participation and potential but yielded few about how to manage student voice activity. An instrumental case study approach was adopted – deliberately selecting schools which would maximise the possibility of answering the research questions in a given time. After being canvassed several schools expressed an interest in this study; five were then selected on the basis of the information recorded in their school self evaluation form – those who had cited a wide variety of student voice activities within their school were selected. They included a secondary school with a 6th form, two large primary schools, one small primary school and a large junior school.

Three procedures were used to gather and analyse data from five headteachers – an initial questionnaire about student voice activity in their schools; a semi-structured interview; and, an analyses cycle. This third procedure involved four more interviews with each headteacher and several exercises including: the transcribing of interviews; respondent validation; pattern searching and pattern matching; explanation building; and, critiquing a draft report. Each final report from each school was compared and contrasted to identify commonalities and plausible truths in a cross-case comparison triangulation exercise.

The findings indicate that the implicit framework used by headteachers is in fact a conceptual framework in which four distinguishable factors can be identified: power; purpose; participation and potential: ‘Power’ is indicated by initiation, regulation, ownership and termination; ‘Purpose’ is related to tenet, intentions, experiences and outcomes; ‘Participation’ is associated with accessibility, choice and voice-equity; and, ‘Potential’ is seen in terms of agency, belonging and competence. The findings also indicate that these four concepts are interdependent, interconnected and interfluent.

The thesis concludes by recommending a power-purpose-participation-potential conceptual model or ‘4P Model’ which headteachers can use to examine student voice activity which promotes holistic improvement in its broadest sense, shapes improvement, engenders a culture of improvement, and meets the dual requirements of students and schools. Viewed through this lens headteachers may consider the wonderful possibilities of student voice activity, and the management journey they might take to maximise its possibilities. There is a symbiosis between how student voice activity is managed and its possibilities and this 4P Model provides a new way to understand and manage shifts in both. Finally this thesis describes a wonderful array of student voice activities which could be of great use to current headteachers interested in expanding their knowledge of what has worked in other contexts.

List of Abbreviations

AFL	Assessment for Learning
BSF	Building Schools for the Future
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PASS	Pupil' Attitudes to Self and School survey
P4C	Philosophy for Children
SEF	Self-Evaluation Form for schools
SVAQ	Student Voice Activity Questionnaire

Chapter One: Introduction to the research

Personal Reflexivity

Phrases such as ‘narcissistic and egotistic’; ‘mere navel gazing’; and, ‘confessions to salacious indiscretions’ are cited by Okely (1992) as terms which should never be associated with ‘reflexivity’. Dilthey (1976) cites the mind becoming conscious of itself during periods of reflexivity. Researchers need to be conscious of their own minds and be aware of, and reflect upon, their own value system, beliefs, experiences and political stance. The purpose of this is to understand how these collections define them as a person and how these collections can impact upon or adversely affect the way in which research in an area is conducted by them.

Throughout this thesis it is hoped you detect a deep level of personal reflexivity; it is hoped that my influence on how the research formed, data collected, analysed and interpreted is clear and understood, or at the very least, as Willig (2001) recommends – acknowledged. I have employed self-conscious analytical scrutiny throughout the conduct of this research.

My Background and Research Rationale

During my career I have had the pleasure of teaching students; managing two schools; improving schools; managing inclusive and targeted services; and, directing change in the children’s services arena. I have been involved with seven local authorities during my career, each offering me the opportunity to experience different settings and political contexts. Whilst working as a school improvement partner I was introduced to a new stream of data on pupil attitudes. Very different in nature to attendance, attainment, predictive, and learning styles data, this new source of data promised to articulate how pupils felt about being learners in their school. Other claims were made about how such data could be collated to provide a picture of the school ethos, from the perspective of the students. A couple of telephone calls to various headteachers, and tours of their schools introduced me to a phenomenon I did

not know existed – children and young people being involved in decision making that impacted on their schools in different ways. Ever since that time I became deeply interested in the multitude of ways children and young people could be involved in decision making in their schools, the impact of this and how their contributions were recorded or recognised. I became more aware of a plethora of English legislation requiring headteachers to consult children and young people on matters that may impact on their lives. They include: The Children Act 2004 (DfES, 2004a); National Healthy School Standard (DfES & NHSS, 2004); Building Schools for the Future (DfES, 2004b); Youth Matters (DfES, 2005); and, Care Matters (DfES, 2006). I was intrigued by how some headteachers talked about it as being the next tool to squeeze out the last drops of improvement – something that was important to my role professionally – and how others talked about it as something important for children and young people in their own right. In order for me to articulate it for others in the realm of school improvement, I had to understand how it could be successfully managed. I conducted an initial study to explore these phenomena in one school.

Initial Study and the Emergence of the 4P's

In the booklet entitled 'Working Together: Listening to the voices of children and young people' (DCSF, 2008a) the Department for Children, Schools and Families points to the benefits of student voice work as being in three areas: that of children's rights; active citizenship; and school Improvement. Under the final heading of 'School Improvement' it is clearly stated how students being involved in decision making in schools can have purposes that can go beyond the broader targets that schools have to now work to. These include: combating disengagement; tackling non-attendance; promoting inclusion; and, improving attainment. Although a small range of examples are given, there is no definitive direction as to how headteachers could manage student voice activity. There is also very limited justification for why they should manage it and virtually nothing on the principles or values which headteachers should espouse or be sympathetic to, instead declaring it as children's rights which should be unconditionally adhered to and supported in practice.

A pilot study was conducted in one primary school. Headings were taken from a school self-evaluation form (DfES & Ofsted, 2004; Great Britain. *Education Act 2005*) (Appendix 2.1) and student voice examples from national guidelines (DCSF, 2008a) to design a questionnaire (Appendix 2.2) which was completed by the headteacher. A deep exploration of those answers – through a semi-structured interview with this headteacher – hinted that there were four broad themes which played some role in how this headteacher managed student voice activity in their school. Those broad themes related to power; purpose; participation; and, potential.

Research Questions

There are no prescribed frameworks to support headteachers in the management of student voice activity and in the absence of a prescribed, directive or explicit framework, this research attempts to explore the implicit frameworks that headteachers draw upon in order to manage student voice activity. Building on the conclusions of the pilot study, it seeks to define and describe further the roles of power purpose participation and potential in this framework. It asks the following main research question with a further four supplementary research questions:

What implicit framework do headteachers draw upon for managing student voice activity?

- a. What is the role of power in this framework?
- b. What is the role of purpose in this framework?
- c. What is the role of participation in this framework?
- d. What is the role of potential in this framework?

Throughout this research children and young people will be collectively referred to as students. The myriad of activities they can be involved in will be collectively referred to as ‘student voice activity’.

Outline of Remaining Chapters

Chapter Two introduces 'Student Voice' charting its history and evolution over the past fifty years. Legal instruments, the role of the state and other contributors are explained. A range of models which could capture the management of student voice activity are examined.

Chapter Three presents a critical review of the literature along with a range of studies which relate to the categories of 'Power', 'Purpose', 'Participation' and, 'Potential'. Each category is examined through a variety of lenses and a range of propositions are presented.

Chapter Four provides a detailed exposition of the research methodology. An instrumental case study approach is justified along with sampling strategy, data gathering techniques and analytical procedures. The 'Case Study Protocol' is introduced along with presentations concerning this research and its validity, reactivity, reliability, bias, generalisability and triangulation.

Chapter Five draws together the results of this study and discusses the meanings from the messages. Additional traits associated with power, purpose, participation and potential are brought to the fore with a detailed exposition of each and its relationship to student voice activity.

Chapter Six presents the conclusions from this study. The research question and the four supplementary questions are answered and a '4P Model' delivered to assist headteachers in the management of student voice activity. Contributions to theory and practice are explained along with reflections and final thoughts.

Chapter Two: Student Voice

Introduction

In this chapter the term 'student voice' is presented and discussed. The vagueness which characterises the many descriptions for it is acknowledged along with an all encompassing definition for the purposes of this thesis. The genesis of student voice is discussed along with evolutions and changes to it. A brief history is given along with challenges it has faced in the recent past. Its changing nature over the past fifty years is examined along with the role of the state and other policy-makers such as governors, local authorities, academy chains and shared policy developments between schools. Legal instruments which underpin the rights of children and young people to be involved in decisions which affect the services they receive or have implications for their quality of life are discussed. In addition, a range of other legal instruments are cited along with the macro-level drive of the state with regards to student voice activity. Four models are presented for viewing student voice in the context of involvement in decision making in schools, consistent with the themes of power, purpose, participation and potential which arose from the pilot study. Hart's (1997) linear model is cited as having the ability to understanding levels of participation. Lodge and Read's (2003) fourfold typology is cited as having the ability for understanding levels of participation and purpose. Fielding's (2001) evaluative model is cited as having the ability to judge how democratic a school is. Carver's (1997) linking model is cited as having the ability to reference gains for students. However no models or frameworks currently exist which prescribe the way in which student voice activity can be or should be managed. This chapter concludes by acknowledging this lack of explicit frameworks or models, instead asserting that the framework being drawn upon by headteachers to manage student voice activity is currently implicit and not yet publicly defined. It also reasserts the proposition that student voice activity can mean different things to different people and so different perspectives may exist on how to manage it.

What is Student Voice?

Students communicating their single, group or collective views, values, attitudes or judgements, or being consulted or actively involved in decision making, or being the agents of change and reform, or leading improvement from the inside-out, or a whole host of other claims is now being fashionably referred to as “student voice” – a wonderful metaphor which encapsulates many of these aspects but is still vague enough to cause confusion about exactly what it is. For the purposes of this study I will use the term ‘student voice activity’ to articulate the application of the collection of terms above.

The term ‘student voice’ was conceived in the sixties and driven by movements through the seventies demanding the rights of students to participate in decision making in schools; in particular the right to express views and to be heard (Cusick, 1973; deCharms, 1976). It could be argued therefore that student voice is rooted largely within a human rights context. Since then a range of legal instruments (discussed below) have guaranteed children and young people the right to have a say in decisions that impact on their lives. However, the lack of any explicit framework or charter specifying how that might happen has left the application of student voice activity open to interpretation.

Student voice has reappeared as a construct that describes the way in which children and young people may have a stake in the decision making processes that will shape their lives and that of their peers (Fielding, 2001; Goodwille, 1993; Levin, 2000). Participation in student voice efforts, according to Mitra (2003) can greatly benefit those children and young people who are involved.

However there are a number of competing agendas, in particular the performativity and school improvement agendas, which have harnessed student voice (Lodge & Read, 2003; Rafferty, 1997; Fielding, 2002; Mitra, 2003). It is argued however, in the context of schools, that these agendas have in fact hijacked student voice. For example, Fielding (2001) argues student voice is sought primarily because of a need to adhere to the improving performance and school improvement agendas as opposed

to any major commitment to human rights; citing adult fear of what children might actually say and an attendant desire to control.

The possibility of students being able to point out areas of deficit in ways that other adults within a school may not is very appealing. The possibility they may have a more insightful perspective on solving that deficit is also a very enticing prospect. The perspective a school has on student voice or the interpretation of its function will likely influence what decisions students will actually be involved in. Here we encounter some fundamental points on views about what student voice may offer. Firstly, the extent that participation in decision making is possible; secondly, the reasons why students might have a voice (Levin, 2000; Lodge & Read, 2003; Mitra, 2004); and, finally the representation of that voice. This is an important point because the cultures and structures of individual schools will impact on how student voice is heard, received and understood, and in some cases distorted (Smyth, 2006). The misrepresentation or distortion of student voice can lead to unintentional disempowerment (Fielding, 2004).

There are a range of views as to whether students should specifically participate in school improvement (Campbell et al, 1994; Connolly, 2004; Fielding, 2004; Goodenow, 1993). There are also views as to the purpose of student participation in school improvement ranging from measuring efficiency and effectiveness (Lodge & Read, 2003; Rafferty, 1997; Stinson, 1993), right through to deep and meaningful involvement in cultural change that leads to more generic improvements (Fielding, 2001; Mitra, 2003; Oldfather, 1995; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). Student voice is increasingly being seen as a tool by which school improvement can be brought about as well as improving outcomes for students (Fielding, 2002; Mitra, 2003; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). Rudduck et al (1996) call students “expert witnesses” who have something to tell us about their experiences of schooling. Levin (2000) goes further calling for student voice to be located at the centre of educational reform.

Mitra (2003) argues that increasing student involvement in decision making in partnerships with teachers and school leaders may create meaningful learning experiences, a view supplemented by Fielding (2004). Such activities, it is argued

could help instil efficacy in students, develop meaningful relationships with teachers, and develop competences and skills (Carver, 1997; Mitra, 2003).

Legal Instruments

Children and young people now have a number of legal instruments and structures which enshrine their rights to be involved in decision making. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) gives children who are capable of forming their own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting them and that the views of the child be given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. In this instrument the term 'children' is used to describe a person under the age of eighteen.

The other key policy dimension involves the UK Labour Government 1997 - 2010. It is argued that this administration from 1997 sought to build on the previous administration's centralised control of the education system (Ball, 2007; 2008). The strategy of increasing investment in the school system, allied to new legislation was employed. Many distinct initiatives with specified targets emerged during this administration, steering schools to consult and involve children and young people in a variety of areas. They include: The Children Act 2004 (DfES, 2004a); National Healthy School Standard (DfES & NHSS, 2004); Building Schools for the Future (DfES, 2004b); Youth Matters (DfES, 2005); Care Matters (DfES, 2006); Citizenship education; personalisation agenda; a children's commissioner; the UK Youth Parliament and the encouragement of school councils and pupil parliaments.

The capacity of student voice activity to act as a driver of change, reform or to be transformative sits within the context of this centralised approach which includes the performativity agenda (MacBeath, 2006). However it is argued that within these parameters there has also been a drive to give school leaders greater autonomy to define the nature of their school, and teachers greater freedom in the implementation of curriculum (Bottery, 2007). Freedom and autonomy can present very different challenges especially when headteachers can have very different interpretations of the same thing.

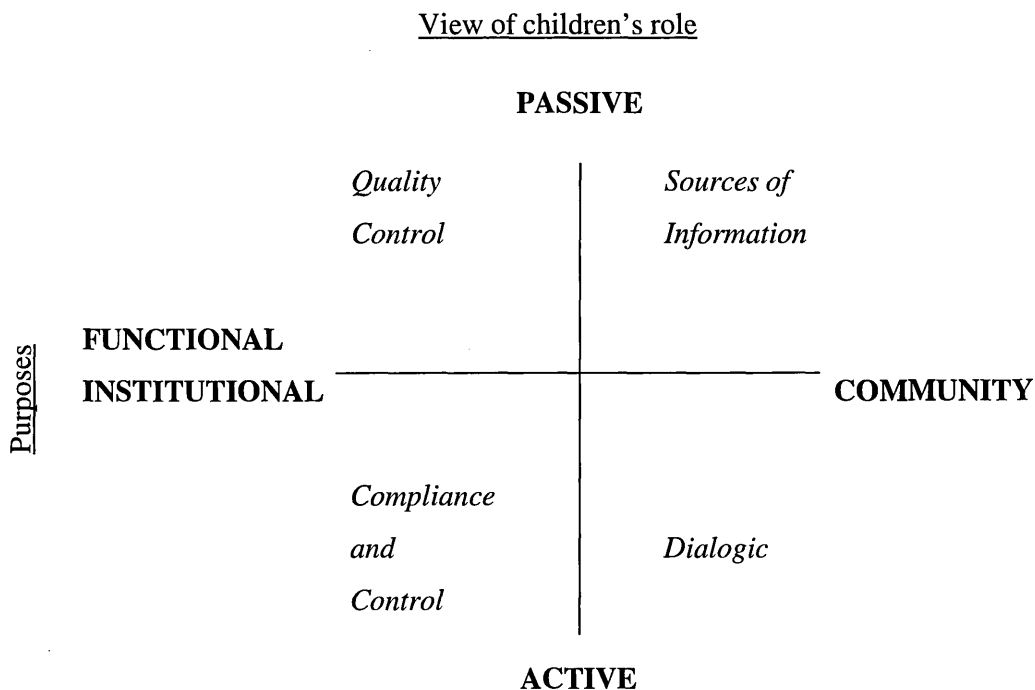
The succeeding Coalition Government (Conservative and Liberal Democrat), has brought together all government policies relating to young people (defined as those of the ages 13 – 19) into one central place – ‘Positive for Youth’ (DfE, 2012). Within this umbrella strategy for young people is the key principle of the need to listen to young people and for them to have their voices heard and responded to appropriately.

Student Voice Models

A number of models exist for conceptualising student voice activity but none really captures it completely. For example, Hart conceptually mapped out student voice on a continuum (Hart, 1997). At one end of this continuum are tokenism, manipulation and decoration. At the other end of the continuum are consultation, reform initiated by students, transformational change and involvements that make a difference. This gives us a linear model for understanding levels of participation students may have in all aspects of decision making.

Lodge and Read (2003) provide a more refined visual model of student voice and its relationship to school reform and improvement (see Figure 1.1). Four quadrants are formed by the use of two bisecting continua – one representing the type of participation (active to passive) and the other locating the purpose (school focused to student focused). ‘Quality Control’ is defined where participation is passive or enforced and the purpose serves the school. Here student voice activities are used to check the quality of service and to highlight strengths and deficiencies. No feedback is given to students.

Figure 1.1



Source: *Improvement in action: sustainable improvements in learning through school-based, teacher-led enquiry* (Lodge & Read, 2003)

‘Sources of Information’ is defined where participation is passive or enforced but the purpose serves the students. Here student voice activities are used to contribute to school improvement. No feedback is given to students. ‘Compliance and Control’ is defined where participation is active and choice based, but the purpose serves the school. Here student voice activities acknowledge students’ rights and justify their voices being heard, but is tokenistic and deceptive. Feedback is given to students. ‘Dialogic’ is defined where participation is active and choice based, and the purpose serves the students. Here student voice activities are used to contribute to improvement. Emancipatory in nature for both process and outcome, activities are designed to be transformative, helping all connect their own narrative to a wider democratic organisational narrative. Feedback is given to students and there is a dialogue to construct shared meaning and deep understanding of issues raised (Lodge

& Read, 2003). This gives us a fourfold typology for understanding levels of participation and purpose students may have in decision making aspects through the lens of school improvement.

Nine clusters of questions to help schools self-evaluate student voice activity are provided by Fielding (2001) who defines 'Dialogic Democracy' where full active participation takes place and meaningful dialogue with students and adults underpin democratic decision making. These questions seek to ascertain where sources of power lie and how cultures and structures help or hinder student voice. This gives us an evaluative model for judging how democratic a school is.

Carver (1997) describes and defines a youth development asset model, quantifying assets developed and gained by young people through involvement in student voice activity over a two year period. Students were actively involved in decision-making in the educational organisations they were part of, although it must be noted here that none were schools and the students involved were all young people. The study focused on a number of holistic experiential education programmes that addressed students in their entirety; viewing them as valuable resources that could positively contribute to their own learning, the education of others, including adults, and improved well-being of their community. A link or relationship was discovered between involvement in student voice activity and the youth development assets of agency, belonging and competence. This gives us a model for linking student voice activity with actual gains for students.

Managing Student Voice Activity

Few studies have attempted to look at what can be gained through student voice activity (Fielding & Bragg, 2003; Oldfather, 1995; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). Fewer still have focused on the effects student voice activity can have on a school (Fielding, 2001; Mitra, 2003; Soo-hoo, 1993). There are none which highlight the role of the headteacher in managing student voice activity or the existence of any explicit framework which can be drawn upon to manage it.

Conclusion

The nature of student voice has changed and evolved over time hence any distinct definition could be challenged by an alternative definition, depending on the point of view and values of the person declaring their definition. Although similarities exist between definitions, the term means different things to different people; depending upon views of how students should take part and how adults might be involved in that happening; what should come out of it; and, whose needs should it serve. It is my view that current models lack the ability to capture all these different dimensions in a way that could assist headteachers in their management of student voice activity. Therefore a study into how student voice is actually managed is warranted as this has the potential to inform current policy.

Legal instruments underpin some aspects of student voice activity but others are left to schools to decide for themselves. Being a key theme within government policy, with regard to children and young people, student voice activity is cited as something that can improve aspects of schooling. However, no direction is given to ensure it can be managed appropriately. Four models have been presented which could contribute towards a management framework for headteachers. With regards to the research questions, a linear model for understanding levels of participation could contribute to answering supplementary question (c); a fourfold typology for understanding levels of participation and purpose could contribute to answering supplementary questions (b) and (c); an evaluative model could contribute to answering supplementary questions (a) and (c); a model linking student voice activity to actual gains could contribute to answering supplementary question (d). Although some aspects are covered in these models, none seem capable of fully capturing the deep complexities of student voice activity and the roles of power, purpose, participation and potential. Therefore no explicit management framework has been articulated to assist headteachers. It is to the dimensions of power, purpose, participation, potential and their roles in a management framework we now turn with an in-depth review of the literature and critique of student voice related studies.

Chapter Three: The 4 P's

Introduction

In this chapter a critical literature review and an examination of studies relating to the management of student voice activity and the roles power, purpose, participation and potential are presented and discussed. Four models for student voice activity which align well with the aforementioned categories are referenced along with their inability to completely capture all four. Alternative models of leadership and management relevant to student voice are examined along with an acknowledgement that power, purpose, participation and potential are not the only models by which the management of student voice activity can be viewed through. The lack of management texts regarding student voice activity is also acknowledged. Power is critiqued through a variety of lenses; examining its complex nature, movements, transactions and how it underpins different relationships within a school. The different philosophical positions with regards to purpose are examined, looking at whom it should serve and why. In particular, focus is given to the drive to improve standards of attainment and how student voice activity can be used to achieve this along with arguments as to whether it actually should. Student voice activity in bringing about change and the outputs of that change are also discussed. Voices being heard, what is actually heard and how it can be listened to are explored through participation. Discussions ensue as to who can actually access student voice activity and how that takes place. Focus is given to students having more than one voice – a range of voices are identified in different contexts along with the ability of students to communicate in a variety of voices. Potential is investigated, focusing on new experiences student voice activity has to offer and the skills which can be developed through it. Other dimensions such as self-esteem, confidence, disengagement, efficacy and self-belief are probed along with a variety of claims that they can be acquired or improved through student voice activity. A wide range of propositions are drawn from this critical literature review. They attest to a number of concepts which need to be considered when managing student voice activity. They include: values, beliefs, principles, transactions, relationships, cultures, structures, outputs and

some complex notions about voice itself. This chapter concludes by hinting at a number of additional aspects which appear to be contained within each of the four categories, but also acknowledges that there may be other categories or other ways to conceptualise aspects which relate to the management of student voice activity. The pilot study, these propositions and the requirements to expose those additional aspects inform the research design of this study.

The 4P's

A critical literature review below highlighted the existence of four broad themes with regard to the management of student voice activity – power; purpose; participation; and, potential – mirroring findings from the pilot study. For example, Hart's (1997) model of student voice focuses on participation. Lodge and Read's (2003) model focuses on aspects of purpose and participation. Fielding's (2001) model focuses on aspects of power and participation, rooted in purpose. Carver's (1997) model focuses on the potential gains from student voice activity. However very few studies exist examining headteachers perspectives on student voice activity. Rarer still are studies or literary contributions to the management of student voice activity – perhaps that contradiction of managing the voice of others goes against the very principle of what student voice is or should be. There are however a range of studies which examine the following areas: empowerment; disempowerment; principles; state reforms; purposes; adolescent growth; participation; disengagement; youth development assets; radical pedagogy and governmentality. Below is a critique of the propositions from these studies, and an attempt to link these and other themes into groupings of power, purpose, participation and potential. Finally they are examined through the lens of the headteacher perspective for managing student voice activity.

Prefacing Power

Within schools there are a plethora of complex relationships between: students and other students; students and a range of different adults; students and hierarchies; students and operational or day-to-day structures; and a range of diverse relationships between the different adults that make up the adult population of the school. These

relationships (with their cultural, historical, ideological, structural, social, communal, professional and other dimensions) can be conceived through the lens of 'power', or power dynamics. According to Robinson and Taylor (2007) understanding power in the school context is central to the debate around student voice activity. This view is taken a step further by Taylor and Robinson (2009) who claim that the way in which power is theoretically understood with respect to student voice activity has implications for what can be achieved through it. If this proposition is accepted then the role power plays in the implicit framework headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity will be linked to their own understanding of power. In addition their understanding of it may be recognisable through what they had already achieved in their school with student voice activity. Not all agree on the definition of power derived from those espousing radical pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1986). Robinson and Taylor (2007) challenge the theoretical underpinnings of student voice with regards to the legacy of radical pedagogy – something from which they believe it is damaged by, or suffers from. In place of the lens of radical pedagogy they believe it should be viewed through a postmodernist lens, citing that this reveals a more fruitful critical examination of power (Taylor & Robinson, 2009); for them it is through this lens that power can be best understood.

Carroll et al (1999) in their study into school-based youth driven violence prevention projects employed a survey approach. A questionnaire, designed to collect mainly quantitative data was used to solicit the views of 348 students in three different high schools. Students created and led a range of health-based initiatives and discussion groups around keeping themselves safe and understanding violence in formats such as emotional violence, sexual violence, and physical violence at differing levels. Although many of these initiatives were successful and the creativity and energy that students brought into processes acknowledged, a general concern emerged as to students' ability to initiate student voice activity on their own terms. Due to the design limitations of this study it is not clear why students had difficulty with initiating things the way they wanted to, but the fact that they did have issues highlight some type of limiting factor. If this proposition is accepted, then power has other associated factors or aspects such as limiting abilities; something which the

headteacher could possibly exercise, indicating some conceptual presence in the implicit framework headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity.

Smyth (2006) identifies levels of power and their key relationship to student engagement and disengagement; the possibilities for school reform and the impact they may have. According to Smyth (2006), providing students with decision-making power is a genuinely transformative endeavour, and one which allows them to bring their cultures, histories, aspirations and stories to the fore. It is here that their voice and perspectives can help to challenge the structures, cultures and power relationships by providing insights into the construction of new reforms. Smyth (2006) believes that the more power students can exercise, the greater their engagement will be in all aspects of school life – but how do they actually exercise power? If we accept Smyth's proposition then power is something that can be given to students which implies it can be taken back, this is a transactional relationship between headteacher and students. Power in the implicit framework headteachers use to manage student voice activity would be transactional, perhaps even quantifiable or qualifiable.

Many advocates of student voice such as Rudduck (2006) argue that student voice related activity can open up major opportunities to transform the relationships between schools, teachers and individual students. Fielding (2004) is a key advocate of the way in which this transformation can take place and be positive. Other advocates such as Angus (2006), McIntyre et al (2005), and Wyness (2006) echo Fielding's views. However these advocates all have a leaning towards power being centred on children themselves and intimate that in doing so the greatest or broadest range of gains will transpire; in fact they believe it will help children on a journey along a continuum from transformational change through to dialogic journeys (Read and Lodge, 2003) and a state of dialogic democracy – where student voice activity reaches its apex for all involved (Fielding, 2004). If we accept this proposition then power must be given by the headteacher to students and left with them, again indicating a transactional, possibly quantifiable or qualifiable dimension to power within the implicit framework headteachers' use to manage student voice activity. This contemporary form of student voice has served as a catalyst for change in some

schools. In some cases it has helped improve teaching. In others it has helped enhance the curriculum. In others it has led to improvements in teacher-student relationships (Fielding, 2001; Mitra, 2003; Oldfather, 1995; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). Some argue that school leaders require student voice as part of the processes that lead to school improvement (Pickering, 1997; Fielding, 2001). Rudduck calls students “expert witnesses” who have something to tell us about their experiences of schooling (Rudduck et al., 1996).

Post-modern Power

According to Allen (2004) the way power relations work in a school can be examined through different lenses and this has implications for how it can or should be managed. In the radical or transformative understanding, there is the fundamental assumption that power is a possession which an individual or group can wield over another in a conscious way. This interpretation of power is consistent with the view that the school and/or teachers have power which can be wrested from them through student voice work and transferred to students. Holland and Blackburn (1998) highlight the great tension in sharing or distributing power citing various examples where the powerful find it incredibly difficult to disempower themselves and therefore never truly empower the powerless. This resonates with a conventional model of the school as a hierarchical institution where teachers and adults hold all the power. However, such interpretations of power relations in the school have been questioned, in particular Ellsworth (1992) argues that this one-dimensional view fails to take into account a plethora of competing factors which, when considered, produce a very different interpretation of power relations. Many factors could contribute to and impact upon these power relationships. They range from an adult fear of what students might actually say and an attendant desire to control right through to the well intentioned adult – the one who claims to know a child or young person well and therefore feels they can speak on their behalf (Fielding, 2001). Cruddas (2001) refers to the authority of the teacher in any teacher-pupil dynamic and describes their belief in being able to speak on behalf of the pupil as ‘the myth of liberal authority’ or the danger of adults claiming to, speak on behalf of children or young people. Fielding (2004) echoes this view and takes it further by stating that any teacher who claims to

speak on behalf of a pupil, whatever the intention, is effectively unintentionally disempowering them. Accepting this proposition, power may be used to control and enforce modes of behaviour, implying that headteachers draw upon aspects of behaviour modification and shaping technologies through student voice activity to shape students into 'better fitting students'.

In their study into student governorships, Hallgarten et al (2004) found that there were teachers and adults who believed student voice activity was a distraction from a school's 'core business' which it had to deliver. Some even believed that the student voice agenda further undermined their own authority. Connolly (2004) however complicates the matter further, feeling there is a strong discourse based on the power students have in schools and guides us to a position to consider whether they actually have too much power. Accepting this proposition, it may be wise for headteachers to regulate power.

Conversely Arnot and Reay (2006) emphasise the role of the school as a site of dialogue and the importance of what they term 'pedagogic voice'. This means that communication in schools is not one-way traffic with an active teacher transferring information to a passive student recipient. Rather it is a co-production of students and students and adults and adults through dialogue (Bakhtin, 1986; Burke, 2007; Taylor & Robinson, 2007). All engage in 'shared dialogue' repeated and different over time and space. This means that understanding power relations in school means understanding the nature of this dialogue. Arnot and Reay (2006) prescribe the deconstructing of pedagogy and examination of the different ways in which students talk to teachers and each other and how different students interpret teacher messages in different ways. Fielding (2004), Angus (2006), McIntyre et al (2005), and Wyness (2006) all argue strongly for the transformative gains that student voice activity can bring, allying themselves with radical pedagogy and the transformative view of empowerment. If we accept this proposition then headteachers must draw upon some type of communications framework associated with dialogue and worth.

Taylor and Robinson (2009) argue for a more 'post-modern' perspective. Recognising the difficulty of defining this concept, they settle on the view espoused

by Lyotard (1984) and the definition ‘incredulity towards meta-narratives’. Lyotard’s view is generally thought to mean a philosophical commitment to a rejection of all-encompassing theories or arguments – a turn away from ‘grand theory’ such as Marxism (Taylor & Robinson, 2009). In this they are arguing for different views of power that better explain the complexities and dynamics of student voice activity with respect to power. A different lens to view power through is Bragg’s (2007) ‘tool for thinking’; which embraces Foucauldian concepts of governmentality (it must be noted here that a full exploration of Foucauldian concepts of governmentality is beyond the scope of this thesis). Foucault (1991) views power as complex, omnipresent, contextual and socially dispersed. Rose (1999) defines ‘government’ as entities which ‘seek to regulate the conduct of conduct, including the relation of the self to the self’. These entities include ‘regulatory’ programmes, strategies and techniques. Power dynamics are inherently more sophisticated and a Foucauldian view can help outline the capacity adults in schools have to support students to work on their own ‘self’ or collective ‘selves’ for the betterment of the ‘self’. The localising of power in this way within individual students; being governed or conducted or facilitated by adults, can transform those ‘selves’ into self-managing, self-directing, self-reliant ‘selves’. A Foucauldian view can help outline the capacity autonomous individuals or students have to ‘shape’ the government – in this case the school – as well as to be shaped by it. Foucault (1991) also asserts that power is productive in nature and where there is power there will be resistance, opposition and counter-compliance. Taylor and Robinson (2009) emphasise strongly the pervasive nature of power and how it is maintained and renewed through different practices. It is not static but changing. This analysis invites teachers and leaders to reflect on their own school and classroom dynamics and how they change as students change. It also invites them to reflect on any impact when the leadership structure in the school changes or crucially when the regulatory goalposts are shifted by the state. This post-modern view of power encourages a focus on understanding student voice in terms of the shifting coalitions of student- student, student-teacher, and teacher-teacher that define the school day. Its proponents argue it presents a more flexible ‘tool for thinking’ than the linear relationship between student voice and change articulated by modernist thinking. In order to see student voice from this view, one must fully understand how these shifting power relationships affect or impact upon student

voice in that context, and therefore it is that understanding on the ever-changing context which is key to then understanding how power and student voice operate at that moment in time. This challenges the idea that there is a progressive continuum on which power sits. The continuum of 'disempowered to empowered' does not seem to be sophisticated enough to capture student voice and the role of power. A bisecting continuum showing the changing contexts might prove useful but would not be able to capture the complex aspects of power. What is clear is that there are different aspects to power which are yet to be discovered.

Power and the Research Questions

Although the studies mentioned above used different methodological approaches to arrive at their conclusions, some identified power and associated different aspects with it. They included the transactional nature of power, the sharing of power and the shaping through power; the ability to limit, control or regulate it; the place or location of it; and, who actually has it. How these aspects relate to the role of power and fit into a framework for managing student voice activity will be investigated through the main research question – and supplementary question (a).

Prefacing Purpose

The more philosophical aspects of student voice activity, including difference-making and those affected, can be conceived through the lens of 'purpose'. In a study into democracy in schools, focused through school councils, Rowe (2003) made some assumptions about the inability of adults to 'devolve' power to students. A case study approach was employed with a sample of eight schools, deliberately selected to maximise what could be learnt. A number of interesting conclusions and assertions came from this study. Although the study contextualises this work through school councils, what is actually being explained are the inner-workings of student voice activity. Rowe (2003) concludes that student voice activity can improve every aspect of school life but throughout the study highlights the different phrases adults use to describe it including student democracy; pupil power; pupil rights; pro-democracy; and different forms of empowerment – and the associated confusion it causes.

Accepting this proposition, students' roles in improving aspects of school life is linked to the beliefs and values of their associated headteacher.

What is also of interest here is that there appear to be a number of perspectives on what student voice activity is actually about in contrast to what it actually does. This is a view echoed by Whitty and Wisby (2007), who claim that there is a lack of clarity regarding the purpose of student voice activity in schools and what areas it should focus on and what forms it should take. Accepting this proposition, headteachers must be drawing upon some underlying principles in their management of student voice activity.

Purpose and Change

The tension between the philosophical position adopted and the way in which changes should happen and be championed, is highlighted by Flutter and Rudduck (2004), MacBeath, Demetriou, Rudduck and Myers (2003), and Fielding and Bragg (2003) but in very different ways and from different perspectives. Through their work on students as researchers Fielding and Bragg (2003) focus on student voice at the student level or micro-level; philosophically starting there (students at the centre). From here they claim student voice activity can contribute to positive changes at the school level or meso-level, and further and wider up to the political or macro-level. Noyes (2005) terms this an 'inside-out' philosophical position on student voice; in essence the student at the centre and therefore the purpose of student voice activity centred on students. MacBeath et al (2003) in championing student voice activity through their toolkit for teachers (a national resource to aid pupil consultation), consider student voice activity from the macro-level; philosophically starting there with national policy. From here they claim it can contribute to positive changes at the meso-level, or school level (as it could be argued is the case with the toolkit for teachers); right through to the micro-level, or the student level. Noyes (2005) terms this an 'outside-in' philosophical position; in essence the school at the centre and therefore the purpose of student voice activity centred on the school. What is being expressed here is a continuum with the purpose of student voice activity being student focused at one end and school focused at the other (Lodge & Read, 2003) If

we accept this proposition then headteachers' views about the way student voice activity can bring about change – its purpose – must fundamentally impact upon what student voice activity they are prepared to manage.

Purposeful Outcomes

There is some debate around whether the purpose of student voice should be located in physically experiencing the activity itself and being involved, or be located in the outputs of such activity. This second part is the contentious area particularly when located in what Noyes (2005) calls 'performativity' or school improvement camp as opposed to tangible gains for the students. Dobie and Gee's (2000) study into active citizenship in schools and the effectiveness of students' involvement in decision making employed a survey to gather data. 26 schools (both primary and secondary) collectively returned 100 pupil questionnaires. This was followed up with in-depth interviews with 11 senior leaders in these schools. A range of benefits were identified which could be described as structural, cultural or social, internal, and external. Structural benefits included changes or improvements to toilets and playgrounds, installation of lockers and improvements in catering. Cultural or social benefits included reductions in the incidence of bullying, and students feeling safer. Internal benefits included increases in confidence, raised self-esteem and greater motivation for students. External benefits included increased attainment and improvements in teaching and learning. Accepting this proposition, there are cultural, physical and social outputs that student voice activity can help deliver, making its outputs worthwhile.

Focusing firstly on the external benefits; the approach to the purpose of student voice which Noyes (2005) contends is 'performativity', is to see student voice as a means to explicitly improve teaching and learning in a school, contribute to improvements in attainment and where appropriate combat disengagement and poor attendance.

Where student voice is championed at points by the state, it has been done in this context and it is this association with prevailing educational discourse which has led to resistance from the many academics who view student voice as principally pupil-centric: its purpose being about pupils first and foremost (Fielding & Bragg, 2003).

The performance of schools is judged therefore in this way and what schools do here matters. Therefore, student voice is a means of contributing to school improvement and its purpose can be seen in these terms. When conceived like this, the purpose of this work is different from a radical tradition where the objective is not to aid the current regime in doing better, but to lay the foundations for a different regime (Arnot, 2006). Such theorists argue that student voice work, by aiding performativity, is masking inequalities in power and becoming incorporated into the neo-liberal discourse that dominates education. Some argue that school leaders require student voice as part of the processes that lead to school improvement (Pickering, 1997; Fielding, 2001) citing that expert knowledge resides within the students themselves (Rudduck et al., 1996). Accepting this proposition, headteachers should value what students have to say and therefore engagement with students could be purposeful.

However, performativity is not confined to improvement measures. Where 'disengagement' from school is concerned it is argued that introducing practices that encourage greater expression of the student voice can assist the academic performance of certain groups including those at risk of disengagement. It is argued that this identified group can benefit from greater consultation leading to reengagement (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007). Hence, the purpose of student voice work can be to support not just school performance, but to also improve inclusion and combat non-attendance. The state is comfortable with combining these areas under the same umbrella. Nonetheless performativity as outlined above is a very narrow definition; a phrase such as instrumental gains or organisational gains might be much more conducive to associating structural benefits such as improved toilets or playgrounds, or cultural benefits such as reduced bullying or a sense of a safer school which it could be argued contributes to an improved environment and ethos. Even internal benefits such as increased motivation or raised self-esteem for students might be causally link to improved performance. The great difficulty here lies in separating student voice activity whose purpose is to benefit students in terms of the things they can gain, and student voice activity that brings about institutional gains, particularly when there is such obvious overlap. Perhaps it

would be easier to conceive of a position which primarily serves one but in doing so benefits the other. Accepting this proposition, headteachers must have beliefs as to who or what should gain from student voice activity; which has implications for the purposeful outcomes it can achieve.

Purposeful Experiences

In stark contrast to performativity, or outcomes-driven student voice activity, there is a perspective which sees the purpose of student voice located in physically experiencing the activity itself, being involved and taking part. It is less about any form of measurable outcome but the actual dialogue itself, and lived experience which is the key purpose (Fielding & Bragg, 2003). This is different to actual participation because it is about the philosophical position – the contrast between taking part in the experience or generating an outcome. Even in this context however, the school could still have outcomes or gains but they are likely to be wider and less subject to metric analysis than those in the performativity camp. Those who believe in the transformative potential in this work will emphasise how the purpose of student voice work is tied up with ‘participation’ so in a sense it is the doing of the work or the experience of it is the purpose (Fielding & Bragg, 2003; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Mitra, 2003). Taking part therefore can be viewed as ‘experientially purposeful’.

Mitra (2003) argues that involvement in purposeful decision making, in partnerships with adults may create meaningful learning experiences for all involved. It is the involvement in these co-created, meaningful learning experiences that make ‘experiential purpose’ so powerful; according to Earl and Lee (1999) students who would otherwise disengage, or find little meaning in their school experience are identified here; citing that they became some of the most fervent proponents in the school reform process, once involved in purposeful activity. In that sense then experiential purpose and performativity-based purpose can be cross-linked with regard to inclusion and attendance. Fielding and Bragg (2003) highlight a number of other gains including: positive sense of self; efficacy; enquiring minds; new skills; social competencies; new relationships; reflecting on own learning; and a chance to

be active and creative as transformative experiences and gains from student voice activity. At its root is the belief in what Fielding describes as the 'radical' tradition of student voice. It is also a concern shared by others who ascribe to the radical tradition that the practice and ethos of student voice work is not adequately 'captured' by policies. For them school policies limit its potential and use consultation with students to reinforce divisions of power. In this way the debate around purpose for academic writers is crucial. A common thread running through this work is the need to defend this transformative, radical tradition (Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007). In encouraging schools to adopt student voice practices however, those in the transformative group have claimed that it can improve what the school offers – Rudduck and Flutter (2000) are quite explicit in this regard. In this way, experiential, participatory and performativity are not so oppositional, but inherent tensions exist. What is clear is that there are different aspects to purpose which are yet to be discovered.

Purpose and the Research Questions

Although the studies mentioned above used different methodological approaches to arrive at their conclusions, some identified purpose and associated different aspects with it. They included philosophical positioning with regards to what student voice is about and the principles which underpin it; who should be the beneficiaries of it; and, what it should feel like. How these aspects relate to the role of purpose and fit into a framework for managing student voice activity will be investigated through the main research question – and supplementary question (b).

Prefacing Participation

The more egalitarian and liberation-associated aspects of student voice activity can be conceived through the lens of 'participation'. The need to ensure fairness, opportunity and equity within student voice activity, in all its forms, is highlighted by a number of studies which inversely examine the consequences of not doing so. For instance, Robinson and Taylor (2007), with regard to the consequences of a lack of equity in student voice activity, argue that more articulate, able students are the ones

who reap the benefits from specific student voice activity, a view echoed by Reay (2006) who cites that articulate students will find ways to have their voices heard and will navigate alternative avenues or channels of communications. Conversely Flutter and Rudduck (2004) argue that introducing practices that encourage greater expression of student voice can assist the academic performance of certain groups of students, particularly those who are at risk of disengagement, a view echoed by Rudduck and McIntyre (2007). MacBeath (2006) in particular supports this view claiming that it is those who are not doing so well who benefit most from student voice activity, once their voice is heard. If these propositions are correct it would appear that student voice activity may not only be open to the articulate few; but also be available to those who have become disengaged from schools processes. There is a disturbing lack of acknowledgment of the voices in between these two groups – the voices of ‘the middle’. Accepting this proposition, there must be some criterion-based framework headteachers draw upon to ensure certain groups do not get lost.

Participation and Being Heard

A study by Keogh and Whyte (2005) into barriers and enablers for participation in school councils and their associated impact, employed a case study approach. A range of focus groups were conducted across 14 schools with almost 400 students. A range of issues arose with regards to the establishment and operation of different school councils in different schools but there were some generalisations or convergent themes regarding participation. These included issues around the makeup of individual student councils, how representative they were of the school, lack of skills amongst some members and an under-representation of younger students. There were also issues regarding senior leaders in schools, in particular whether they were really listening to the collective voice of their school council and whether their school council fully understood the pressures placed upon senior leaders. Although there are limitations with case study design it would appear that these convergent opinions highlighted issues around equity and the differences between individual voice and collective voice. The findings from this study resonate strongly with the work of Reay (2006) who highlights four major factors and some important dimensions to the concept of voice. The first factor here is that individual students

have individual voices and may wish to participate individually – a single student may want to participate in a sole decision-making endeavour. The second factor is that groups or collections of individuals may want to participate as a collective, or have their collective say on a single issue. The third factor is where there are competing individuals or groups who want to be involved in a decision making endeavour but with very different aspirations as to the outcome of this endeavour, what is often referred to as the cacophony of competing voices (Reay, 2006). Finally, the fourth factor where students have different styles of voice which differ by context, for example social voice, pedagogic voice, political voice (Reay, 2006). These factors have major implications for how equitable student voice activity can actually be, and as a headteacher how equity can be managed so all can participate with an equitable voice.

Participation and What is Heard

Being listened to and what is heard present markedly different challenges according to Arnot and Reay (2006). They distinguish between pedagogic voice – the language of learning; social voice – the language of community; and political voice – the language of democracy and claim that students will voice themselves differently in different contexts in different ways. In order to solicit the authentic expression of the wants of individuals and the collective students must be allowed to speak in different ways in different contexts. This means they must be able to participate in a range of activities from the social, through to pedagogic and political. The implications for this study would be that headteachers would have to manage a broad range of activities or risk student voice becoming one dimensional. This implies student voice is multifaceted. Providing different contexts, spaces and places for participation in different types of student voice activity allies with one of the nine requirements identified by Fielding (2001) for a school to be able to claim they practice dialogic democracy.

Baginsky et al (2007) in their study into students' and teachers' views of their school council employed a survey to collect data. A questionnaire designed to collect mainly quantitative data but with scope to collect some qualitative data was sent to a

large random sample of teachers in both primary and secondary schools. Many schools also returned a response from their students. Different perspectives were compared and contrasted. The view of many teachers in this study was that their school benefited from the outcome of school council work. As well as some measurable or quantifiable outputs, it was perceived that there was an ongoing causal link between improved communication between all members of the school community and the work of the school council. Responses from almost all students in the primary sector related to being given a 'voice', being listened to and improving communication. The notion of the fairness of voice is very powerful for students in this study; in particular the area regarding equity of individual and collective student voice and the sense of being listened to. If we accept this proposition then headteachers perspective of what works well for students may not align with students' perspectives, implying that differing perspectives on participation exist.

Participation and how Student Voice is Heard

What students are heard and how they are listened to links directly with the channels by which their voices are captured (Fielding, 2004). Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) claim that the words 'participation' and 'involvement' with respect to student voice activity are synonymous. For others the two terms represent a plethora of views and meanings on what students could and should be able to do with regards to student voice activity. Davies et al (2000) in their review of pupil participation in four European countries highlight how legislation has been used to ensure students have a role in decision making in schools, thus opening channels for participation. They cite the legal requirements for student councils and committees; involvement in curriculum design; regional consultation on government policy and proactive complaints procedures as responsible for ensuring a systemic approach to student voice activity. One of the key benefits of such approaches was that there was no longer a reliance on the personalities of students to ensure student voice activity took place, nor were the less articulate or voiceless middle prevented from accessing student voice activity, thus ensuring continuity of participation for all students who attend a particular school. This is in stark contrast to England where a lack of systems, frameworks or models exist to assist in schools managing student voice

activity (Davies et al, 2000). It could be argued that the European countries have understood the complex power, cultural, structural and relational dynamics between students and the institutions they inhabit, and have reconciled these with additional legal structures and resources to ensure participation and involvement. Both Smyth (2006) and Mitra (2006), in the context of England, acknowledge a lack of challenge in our understanding of structures and cultures that promote participation and widen access or involvement. Accepting this proposition, headteachers lack the necessary legal instruments to manage student voice activity, implying the framework they draw upon is not explicit.

In acknowledging this lack of legal instruments to support, maintain and challenge existing cultures and structures Shier (2001) claims that many schools are not ready for a school council, having not fully explored why they want one and whether the adults in their school are ready to embrace new values regarding student voice. Whitty and Wisby (2007) in their study into the nature and success of school councils echo this view. They investigated how a range of identified barriers to the initiation and success of school councils could be overcome. Their study highlighted a number of structures and cultures which hindered progress including a lack of readiness of staff to support their school council, citing adults' lack of understanding of their function as a weak area which creates barriers. Beveridge's (2004) study into home-school relationships and pupil participation in school decisions, reported a tension between students having much more scope to be involved in decision making at home than in school. The structures and cultures within schools probably differ from social settings. There could be barriers to participating in one setting, which do not exist in another setting. The study also highlighted different types of voice which exists: home voice; social voice; pedagogic voice, and along with these categorisations different scopes and limitations for active participation. Accepting these propositions, participation is a complex element with many competing aspects depending on the context in which student voice activity takes place and this has massive implications for what can actually be managed.

Participation and Choice

Opening channels and spaces and contexts so that students' voices can be heard does not necessarily guarantee that they will be heard as students still can choose whether they want to participate or not. Pastor (2002) asserts that students should be able to exercise their voices in areas that matter to them and what should parallel this is an understanding of that range of choices. According to Frost (2008), there is now a general acceptance that students can, and do, participate in decision making in schools. In fact students attach a great deal of importance to having a choice (Biermann, 2006). Personal autonomy aligns with the view of Rudduck and Flutter (2006) citing the need for the development of individual identity, personal autonomy and choice in developing schools as communities. In their study of school councils Whitty and Wisby (2007) found many school councils to be exclusive bodies which barred access for many students; in effect denying them the opportunity to participate. Whilst arguing for the right to choose to be involved, the right to disassociate withdraw or abstain from student voice activity must also be acknowledged. Arnot et al (2003) also recognise this challenge of students who choose not to have their voices heard, citing the importance of understanding the hidden messages in silence. This has implications for managing student voice activity, in particular how headteachers manage and respond to silence. What is clear is that there are different aspects to participation which are yet to be discovered.

Participation and the Research Questions

Although the studies mentioned above used different methodological approaches to arrive at their conclusions, some identified participation and associated different aspects with it. They included democracy, equity and the criteria drawn upon to define these; how voices are heard and whether they can and should be heard; and, headteachers' understanding of how that hearing can take place and the responses to it. How these aspects relate to the role of participation and fit into a framework for managing student voice activity will be investigated through the main research question – and supplementary question (c).

Prefacing Potential

Student voice activity which leads to new skills and the development of assets and improved self-sense, can be conceived through the lens of 'potential'. There is a strong resonance here with work in the field of youth development gains (Carver, 1997). The potential for student voice activity to create growth opportunities for students is highlighted in a number of ways and from studies with different methodological perspectives (Kernaleguen, 1980; Villarruel & Lerner, 1994; Schapps, Watson, & Lewis, 1997; Connell, Gambone & Smith, 1998). For example, Kernaleguen (1980) identifies self-worth, belonging and competence as the main assets or growth opportunities from student voice activity; where self-worth is representative of feeling one has the ability to change things so in essence is describing one's sense of agency. Villarruel and Lerner (1994) identify knowledge, belonging and competence to the same effect, as do Schapps, Watson and Lewis (1997) categorizing the assets as autonomy, belonging, and competence. Connell, Gambone and Smith (1998) differ with their labels of navigation, connection and productivity but these are still synonymous with the assets of agency, belonging and competences. Carver's (1997) model of youth development assets also use these three terms. Several pieces of work on adolescents state that the assets of agency, belonging and competence are necessary factors for children to remain motivated and achieve academic success (Eccles et al., 1993; Goodenow, 1993). Others come to the same conclusions – that agency, belonging and competence are essential elements for adolescent growth (Roeser, Midgley, & Urdan, 1996; Mitra, 2008; Stinson, 1993). Accepting this proposition, a belief in developmental gains must exist.

Potential Efficacy

Cleaver et al (2005) in their longitudinal study into citizenship education in England identify a clear distinction between the perceptions of teachers and that of students in terms of their views on the outcomes of student voice activity for students. Teachers perceived great benefits for students such as greater involvement in their communities, and engagement in issues affecting the locality and involvement in school-based decision making activities. In contrast, the overall perception of students was that they could only moderately influence decision making in school.

This represents a divergent view of two aspects of student efficacy: firstly students' perceived capacity to actually affect change; and, secondly the sense or belief that they could affect change if they chose to. If adults, particularly headteachers, draw upon a framework to manage student voice activity, there must be some convergence of their perception of the potential of student voice activity with that of their students.

In contrast to this Haste's (2005) study into young people and civic engagement employed a survey approach. Haste asserts that students in this study became part of a self-fulfilling cycle: participation in decision making increased confidence and in doing so made students want to be more involved in other decision making. The notion of a prophetic self-fulfilling cycle is a compelling one – it hints at a "Pandora's box effect". This links intrinsically with power, implying that once student voice activity gets to a certain stage, headteachers can no longer control it.

Hudson (2005) in a study into student identity and citizenship education employed an action research approach. This study in one secondary school took place over a three year period, embracing the action research cycle across this time frame. Hudson (2005) denotes that positive changes brought about through this research included an increased sense of efficacy for students and the belief that they could change things and also cites the development of more productive relationships between students and adults; in some instances adults who students might not normally have come into contact with. An example given was adults from community groups and the police. This has implications as the assumption here is that adults actually want more productive relationships with students. Accepting this proposition, adults strive for better relationships with students and student voice activity is one vehicle through which this is possible.

Davies' (1999) study into school councils and pupil exclusions employed a case study approach. It centred on whether a link existed between reductions in exclusions and the presence of participatory structures such as school councils. Davies (1999) claims that a number of key elements assist in making a school more participatory. They include students who have a sense of agency; and students' agency which leads to change.

There were different methodological approaches to the aforementioned studies with each identifying the role of efficacy or agency. This included two important aspects: the perception of level of efficacy, or sense of agency; and, actual efficacy or agency that led to change. Giving students a voice and involving them in decision making as well as two way dialogue can provide them with opportunities to grow and develop new skills. A range of other studies claim that student voice activity can develop students' sense of agency and in some cases increase students' sense of agency and voice (Costello et al., 2000; McLaughlin, 1999; Pittman & Wright, 1991). According to Costello et al (2000) student voice activities can give students the chance to influence matters that really have meaning and value for them, a view echoed by Pittman, Irby and Ferber (2000).

Potential Connections

Deuchar's (2003) study into participative decision making and the challenges of citizenship education for students and teachers employed a case study approach. A small sample of qualitative interviews took place with students and teachers. Anecdotal evidence pointed to changes in the ethos of the school, in particular a sense of ownership or connectedness to the school. The idea that more students can feel connected to a school – an increase in quantity of connectedness, or that students can feel better connected – an increase in the quality of connectedness is an intriguing one; particularly if student voice activity is the casual link. This suggests an inclusivity element in the framework headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity. However, the limitations in research design have meant that this can only be claimed subjectively and anecdotally here. Yowell and Smylie (1999) in describing the relationship between students and teachers or adults in a school argue that learning is bidirectional – students learn from teachers and teacher can and do learn from students.

Gold and Gold (1998) advocate the importance of school councils and their derivatives such as class councils, claiming they have positive impacts. Drawing upon interviews with headteachers, teachers and students from a range of schools

with school councils, they claim that students who did participate were now more involved in caring for other students and more respectful of school resources and property; something which could be described as a sense of connectedness with, and belonging to the school. Hannam's (2001) study into evaluating the impact of student participation employed a case study evaluation approach. A number of convergent views emerged. Headteachers and senior managers who were interviewed felt student voice activity helped to raise student self-esteem, increased motivation and resulted in students feeling empowered. Other themes which emerged included student voice activity and a perceived relationship or association to enhancing attainment, mainly due to improved teacher-student relationships, improved attendance and a sense of a better engagement with learning. 12 secondary schools were involved with 53 teachers and 237 students – this is a reasonably large sized sample of schools, teachers and students anecdotally saying the same things. Either the limitations of research design have pointed participants towards these anecdotal claims or there is some underlying thread regarding connectedness and relationships. Accepting this proposition, student voice activity improves the relationship between individual students and the school. Interestingly a range of other studies claim that student voice activity can foster a sense of belonging, helping students to forge closer, more intimate relationships and connections with adults in the organisation (McLaughlin, 1999; Pittman & Wright, 1991; Takanishi, 1993). Adults may also benefit from these closer connections, setting up opportunities for a reciprocal arrangement whereby teachers and adults learn from their students; and with their students, and visa versa. This reciprocal shared learning state between adults and students where both parties benefit from their involvement in decision making is defined as collegial reciprocity (Fielding, 2004). This state however assumes adults want these additional relationships and assumes students do too. This has implications because it assumes students and teachers want to be 'shaped' by each and that headteachers have the ability to manage it.

Potential Acquisitions

Fielding and Prieto's (2002) collaborative action research project in Chile, between students and university researchers claim students developed a sense of agency along

with new research skills as part of the changes within this study. What is important to note from this study is the focus on training or the development of research skills and competences for the students. Inman and Burke (2002) cite a number of skills which students can acquire through involvement in student voice activity, particularly those skills and competences required for involvement in some democratic processes such as managing meetings, setting agendas and taking minutes. Accepting this proposition, headteachers must know about the skills that can be developed through student voice activity and how to support it.

Miller (1996) cites the possibility of younger children developing skills and competences through involvement in student voice activity. They include communication skills with regard to expressing their own needs, skills of cooperation, negotiation and problem-solving. In their action research study into students as researchers, Fielding and Bragg (2003) claim students were involved in a range of real-life problem solving exercises which required the development of a range of skills and competences. Accepting this proposition, headteachers must value activity which develops skills in real world contexts.

Mitra's (2004) work on the benefits of student voice found marked and measurable gains in competences and skills when students were involved in student voice activity over a significant period of time. What resonates here is the findings on how the structure of those activities and the subsequent relationships with adults had a fundamental impact on the gains students were able to experience. However this study focused on one school, studied over a two year period.

A range of other studies claim that student voice activities can allow pupils to learn, develop and enhance a whole range of skills and competences, rooted in real life situations. These activities engage pupils in solving real life problems (Fielding, 2001; Goodwillie, 1993; Takanishi, 1993), assuming more active roles within the classroom and organisation (Costello, Toles, Spielberger, & Wynn, 2000), and the development of inter-personal skills, or 'life skills'. What is clear is that there are different aspects to potential which are yet to be discovered.

Potential and the Research Questions

Although the studies mentioned above used different methodological approaches to arrive at their conclusions, some identified potential and associated different aspects with it. They included developmental gains or adolescent growth; benefits to students and teachers or other adults; and, real world applications which enhanced the educational offer. How these aspects relate to the role of potential and fit into a framework for managing student voice activity will be investigated through the main research question – and supplementary question (d).

Alternative Models

The distributed leadership model (Spillane et al, 2004) recognises the possibility of multiple leaders at different levels throughout a school, along with the headteacher. Hargreaves (2007) cites this model as being particularly useful in redesigning systems or organisational change which requires lateral decision making processes as opposed to hierarchical. It is rooted in organisational improvement, particularly leadership development (Spillane, 2006) and focused upon the interactions of those in both formal and informal leadership roles. This model values the contribution of each individual leader to leadership development and its role in organisational improvement (Leithwood et al, 2004). It focuses heavily on the key decision maker and power owner allowing teachers and other adults to have a stake in decision making; exercise power, authority and influence in a given time, space and context – conceptualised through the lens of leadership. Educational leadership according to Bogotch (2000) requires the moral use of power when purposefully interceding in aspects of school life. Holland and Blackburn (1998) question whether the less powerful ever truly get to exercise power, citing the powerful being able to control power, limit it and stop it being used.

Bickmore (2001) extends the model by questioning why distributed leadership should only involve adults and ascribes the role of students in being able to exercise power, authority and influence through a distributed leadership model. Jackson (2000) examines this further focusing on research groups involving students as well as adults to explore school issues. This model resonates with some of the discussions on

power (above) in particular, whether power is something that can be given or distributed to students or taken back from them.

Distributed leadership is principally focused on improving the school (Spillane, 2006). Little regard appears to be given as to whether students have any interest in developing the leadership capabilities of adults, or their own. The notion that it should firstly serve students is counter intuitive to the principles of organisational improvement which underpin it. The purpose therefore is about school improvement and new ways power can be utilised through improved leadership potential. Viewed in this way, a model of distributed leadership might lack the ability to fully examine the role of purpose in managing student voice activity. Although these issues are not insurmountable, they presented challenges to answering the research question and the supplementary questions.

According to Shields (2004) the dialogic leadership model espouses transformational leadership focused on positive interactions and relationships within the organisation, underpinned by dialogue. In this sense there are commonalities with distributed leadership which also focuses on interactions and relationships. It differs however in that it is not solely focused on developing just leadership capability and improvement; instead focusing on areas such as social justice, equity within schools and the quality of the lived experience for students (Astin & Astin, 2000). The level of social justice in schools according to Kincheloe and Steinberg (1995) can be judged by looking at levels of democracy, optimism, empathy and justness.

Dialogic leadership is principally focused on transformation of the social condition (Foster, 1989; Shields, 2003) identifying injustices or inequalities and using dialogue to underpin positive change. However, what is not clear is whether students are allowed to be the identifiers of these injustices and inequalities or whether this is driven by the institution. Shields (2004) argues that the development of strong relationships between educators and students is the key to enhancing dialogic leadership. Burbules (1993) maintains that all participants must be firmly committed to relationships built upon continuous communication. However little regard appears to be given as to whether students have any interest in developing these relationships

or if their perceptions of inequalities and injustices are the same or completely different to those of leaders. Both assumptions are counter intuitive to what student voice activity actually is or could be about. The dialogic leadership model could present challenges to examining the role of participation and the role of power. Viewed in this way, a model of dialogic leadership would lack the ability to fully examine the roles of power and participation in managing student voice activity. Although these issues are not insurmountable, they presented challenges to answering the research question and the supplementary questions. This study acknowledges that there are a range of alternative models through which the management of student voice activity could be examined fruitfully, but also cites perceived challenges in using them to fully answer the research question and the supplementary questions.

Conclusion

A critical review of a range of studies and contemporary literature pertaining to student voice activity was conducted. Although there were many limitations to these studies, their conclusions, propositions and assertions relate to the groupings and definitions of power, purpose, participation and potential, reflecting findings from the pilot study; however there may be other, more suitable categories not listed here. They include: the currency of student voice activity – the worth of each activity at that particular moment in time; compliance with student voice activity – the role of English law in forcing compliance with certain activity; capability of others adults to ensure student voice activity takes place; governor-directed student voice activity; and, whether students actually care, need or want student voice activity. The worth of an activity may be determined by its relationship to the plan to improve the school. Lack of adult skills or negative views and values may be the barrier to student voice activity; conversely positive views and values or highly skilled adults may be the key to more comprehensive programmes involving students. The composition of school governors and their understanding or willingness to engage with student voice activity could be the deciding factor on whether certain activities take place or not. However, these other categories are beyond the scope of this thesis. A range of propositions drawn from the literature above present a number of philosophical elements which may be present in the implicit framework headteachers use to manage

student voice activity. They include values, beliefs and principles. Other propositions drawn from the literature outline a number of contextual elements which may be present in this implicit framework. They include the political, social, pedagogic, communal, inclusive and developmental; particularly in regard to the different voices students may possess. Some propositions outline technical elements including power transactions, regulation, students shaping adults and vice versa. Others outline performativity, accountability and relational elements. Those propositions collectively do not provide a detailed exposition of a management framework that headteachers can draw upon with regards to student voice activity. What is clear is that this implicit framework maybe hidden amongst the cacophony of voices in the current literature, or does not yet exist in a way that can be easily articulated.

What is required are the views of headteachers and their articulation of the framework they draw upon to manage student voice activity in their schools to answer the main research question. The roles of power, purpose, participation and potential in that framework – the four supplementary questions – require an appropriate approach to draw out their roles in this framework. It is to that we now turn with an in-depth exposition of methodology

Chapter Four: Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter the methodological underpinnings of this study follow a paradigmatic discussion acknowledging a number of research traditions. A relativist ontological position is adopted, justified through research questions which require knowledge through social construction and the drawing out of multiple realities, internal experiences, interpretations and constructions of headteachers in this study. An interpretivist epistemological stance is described, justified through research questions which require the researcher to interpret and make sense of each headteacher's interpretation and understanding of their world. A detailed exposition of the research methodology follows. A case study approach is adopted, justified through the need for a detailed examination of the perspective of each headteacher on their management of student voice activity. Discussion of the sampling strategy follows acknowledgement of an instrumental approach – intentionally selecting schools with lots of student voice activity which require some form of managing. Research ethics, consent, confidentiality and anonymity are discussed with reference to documents in the appendices. A 'Case Study Protocol' is defined and described, containing the aforementioned documents along with the justification for the research design, research tools, order of use and an outline for the final report. Research methods, data gathering and data analysis techniques are presented. Three procedures are discussed: the use of a questionnaire about student voice activity in a school; semi-structured interviews with headteachers along with a respondent validation exercise; and an analysis cycle between the researcher and each headteacher. Within this analysis cycle a detailed exposition of a variety of techniques is given including: primary analysis; pattern searching and pattern matching; explanation building; and, presentation of analysis and interpretation in an individual case draft report. A cross-case comparison exercise is conducted on each of the five reports to draw out commonalities and differences. These are brought together in one final report which is critically reviewed by each headteacher. Finally, the concepts of validity, reactivity, reliability, bias, generalisability and triangulation are discussed with

regards to the approach taken. Challenges and limitations are presented including the possibilities of: researcher reactivity; partial representations of reality; plausibility; striving towards ideal truth; and, the impact of the sampling strategy. This chapter concludes by acknowledging a range of prominent authors who have used similar methodological approaches to add to the body of knowledge about student voice activity, citing this study in the identification of a conceptual framework being drawn upon to manage student voice activity.

Research Methodology

Critical to the success of any research is the research methodology – the place where the research philosophy, approach, values and methods are defined, defended and justified (Morgan & Smircich, 1980; Maione, 1997). Many researchers such as Morgan and Smircich (1980) argue that the suitability of a research methodology must stem from the nature of the social phenomena to be explored – in effect the research questions should shape the type of methodology employed. Therefore it is critical the researcher understands different research methodologies and their limitations as this is the key to selecting the most appropriate method to answer the research questions; a view echoed by Maione (1997).

Paradigms

In devising the research design and its justification it is necessary to acknowledge all forms of research belong to a paradigm which is ontologically and epistemologically underpinned. It is here that assumptions about knowledge, reality and nature are asserted (Maione, 1997). A paradigm can be described as a theory or belief system that guides the way we do things or formalises a set of practices (Guba, 1990). According to Chalmers (1982) a paradigm can be described as a set of general theoretical assumptions and some laws about the way in which knowledge can be formed, and a set of techniques for applying those laws to the formation of knowledge.

Paradigms have a number of elements. According to Guba (1990), paradigms can be distinguished and characterised through their ontology, epistemology and methodology. Paradigms ontologically articulate what is reality; epistemologically articulate how what is known is known; and methodologically articulate how to find things out. In effect paradigms characterise a view of knowledge, how we see ourselves in relation to this knowledge and the methodological strategies we use to discover and challenge this knowledge. In contrast to this Chalmers (1982) claims that paradigms have five components: explicit laws and general theoretical assumptions; metaphysical principles; standards for applying those laws; methodological prescriptions concerning the conduct of work; and, instruments and techniques for data. From these two descriptions it could be deduced that a paradigm is something which is static and describable. Kuhn (1962) challenges this position articulating a view that a paradigm is something that remains stationary for a period of time and then shifts and changes as new revolutions in thinking occur, thus making any paradigm difficult to describe.

Greene et al (2001) cite a number of different paradigms which both guide and dictate methodological implications, limitations and challenges to validity and to a greater or lesser extent define the research methods as either quantitative or qualitative, or in the case of mixed methods approaches, both. Within the field of social science there are a number of methodological traditions, including positivism and constructivism. Understanding the similarities, differences and intricacies of each and their relationship to the phenomena being explored has been crucial in shaping the research design, in both justifying one approach and discounting many others.

Positivism

The tradition of positivism decrees that scientific knowledge is authentic knowledge (Maxwell & Delaney, 2004). The creation of such knowledge comes through research which emphasises the model of natural science. Such knowledge must come from positive affirmation of theories and research conducted using research methods. From the purely positivist perspective research methodology should incorporate theory and hypothesis testing, standardised data collection, explanation, statistical

analysis, prediction, confirmation and deduction (Maxwell & Delaney, 2004; Schrag, 1992). The researcher adopts an objective position, collects facts and then builds up an explanation. These facts are arranged in a chain of causality (Finch, 1986). Positivism, thus, which is based on the natural science model of dealing with facts, is more closely associated with quantitative approaches to data collection. Deductive reasoning usually supports the positivist research journey – working from the more general to the more specific (Schrag, 1992). This journey usually involves a theory on the topic of interest or a research question followed by a narrowing down into more specific hypotheses. This is further narrowed down to a point where the hypothesis can be addressed and tested and ultimately a confirmation or disconfirmation of the original theory (Maxwell & Delaney, 2004).

Constructivism

The tradition of constructivism decrees that scientific knowledge is constructed knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The creation of such knowledge is built up by researchers experiencing different realities, rather than discovered from the natural world. Such knowledge is socially constructed rather than objectively determined. From the purely constructivist perspective research methodology should incorporate theory and hypothesis generation, exploration, qualitative analysis, discovery, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and induction (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Smith, 1984). Statistical analysis can also be applied to qualitative data which has been highly coded making it amenable to these techniques (Creswell, 2003). The researcher adopts a subjective position, appreciating the different meanings and constructions that people place upon their experience (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 1991). Researchers are interested in discovery, insight, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing (Merriam, 1988). Constructivism, which deals with understanding the subjectivity of social phenomena, is traditionally and more closely associated with qualitative approaches to data collection. Inductive reasoning usually supports the constructivist research journey – working from the more specific to the more general. This journey usually involves specific observations and measures followed by the detecting or discovery of patterns and

regularities. Tentative ideas are explored which lead to the developing of general conclusions or theories.

Paradigmatic Challenges

There are general shortcomings in both the positivist and constructivist paradigms which are widely acknowledged (Phillips & Burbules, 2000; Reichardt & Cook, 1979; Reichardt & Rallis, 1994). These include philosophical problems and shortcomings in the following areas: induction in that probabilistic evidence is obtained as opposed to final proof, when conducting empirical research; that observation is not perfect because our observations are affected by our backgrounds and experiences – the theory-ladenness of facts; the value-ladenness of inquiry – that we as human beings can never be value free. Both paradigms also incorporate a variety of safeguards to try and minimise various types of invalidity (Sandlowski, 1986). Purists from both the positivist paradigm (Maxwell & Delaney, 2004; Schrag, 1992) and the constructivist paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Smith, 1984) will cite many paradigmatic differences between schools of thought, particularly ontological and epistemological differences and incompatibilities. These differences and challenges have been taken into account, given due consideration and, through this, the methodology to answer the research questions has been selected.

Ontological Positioning

The importance of a researcher's view of reality – their ontological belief has implications for any research design. In describing the characteristics of different paradigms Guba (1990) highlights competing ontologies and beliefs about what exists and the nature of reality. Ontological beliefs and positions concern a researcher's view of the nature of reality and the existence and relationships of humans to that reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Positivist and realist ontologies view the world as something that is real and can be studied objectively without concern for human existence; such ontological beliefs surmise that reality is built on facts which are out there just waiting to be discovered

using the right methods. Investigating the world from this position can be done objectively and without concern for how humans create meaning (Lincoln & Guba, 2005); something that Fleetwood (2005) argues is the source of ontological flaws in relativist ontologies.

Relativist ontologies view the world as a social reality. This ontological view outlines a position where knowledge is socially constructed from drawing out the internal experiences, interpretations and constructions that individuals give about their inner world. In this view reality is a social construction which is not objective or fixed. It acknowledges multiple realities and different perspectives of the same phenomena and that knowledge emerges through individual interpretation which is value laden (Lincoln & Guba, 2005). Although they critique, acknowledge and highlight the shortcomings of both realist and relativist ontologies, Edwards et al (1995) declare relativism to be the quintessential position for academic research, claiming it to be the only position in which social science inquiries should be based (Edwards et al, 1995). To best answer the research questions a relativist ontological position was adopted. This ontological position is much more favourable to the context of the research and the actual research questions. It acknowledges the potential for different perspectives from each headteacher and allows for the possibility of different interpretations of what student voice activity which has implications for how it can be managed. The researcher creating meaning from the social constructions of each headteacher was key to answering the research question and the supplementary questions.

Epistemological Positioning

The importance of a researcher's perceived relationship with the knowledge – their epistemological stance has implications for any research design. In describing the characteristics of different paradigms Guba (1990) highlights competing epistemologies and beliefs about whether researchers are part of the knowledge or external to it. Epistemological stances and positions concern a researcher's questioning of how they know the world or reality and the relationship between the knower and the known (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Interpretivist epistemologies assume that we cannot separate ourselves from what we know. Who we are and how we understand the world is central to how we understand ourselves, others and the world (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 1991). In this then the researcher and the object of investigation are intrinsically linked. Meanings and understanding develop experientially and socially lead to an inter-subjective construction of reality; or the world as we know it (Merriam, 1988). Reality and knowledge are not separate and truth is a negotiation of dialogue and interpretation (Smith, 1984). Through conflicting negotiations, underpinned by dialogue, knowledge or truths in a particular moment emerge.

Interpretations by different headteachers of their different experiences of the management of student voice activity could link with the drawing upon a range of different frameworks for the management of student voice activity by different headteachers in different schools. By investigating the lived experience of these headteachers it might be possible to find patterns that match and lead to generalisations which link together the implicit frameworks drawn upon by a number of headteachers. This epistemological stance is much more conducive to answering the research questions addressed in this thesis. It acknowledges the possibility of different perspectives and interpretations of truth. Interpretivists such as Gadamer (1975) argue that human beings reveal their worlds through conversations, dialogue and shared understandings. That knowledge is intrinsically intertwined and revealed through the interactions and shared understanding of the investigator's interpretation of the participant's interpretation.

This approach involves the participant trying to make some kind of meaningful sense of their own interpretation of their experience; trying to understand their own world. Alongside this, and not necessarily in a linear fashion, is the researcher's attempt to meaningfully interpret the participants own interpretation. It is here in this shared understanding of the interpretation itself where knowledge or truth lies. This may be a partial representation of a participant's reality; something which is acknowledged by realists (Popper, 1972; Bhaskar, 1986; Mingers, 1995) that we can never know the exact nature of reality, but should strive towards an ideal truth (Midgley, 2000).

Schwandt (2000) describes three epistemological stances which have many similarities but some distinct differences: an interpretivist stance; a hermeneutics stance and a perspectivist stance.

From an interpretivist epistemological stance methods can be used to determine meaning from actions; that it can be discovered, that it is procedure or rule driven (Schwandt, 2000). From a hermeneutic epistemological stance action is not independent of interpretation; it emerges through interpretation as opposed to being discovered, it is a condition of being, understanding is interpretation (Schwandt, 2000). This idea of discovering meaning from action suited the research question and the supplementary questions – a place where a lack of meaning and clarity currently exists (lack of explicit framework; lack of clarity over terminology for student voice activity). Therefore an interpretivist epistemological position was adopted.

Methodological Positioning

The importance of a researcher's strategic pathway – their methodological approach has implications for any research design. In describing the characteristics of different paradigms Guba (1990) highlights competing methodologies and approaches to the gaining of knowledge about the world which fall broadly into the categories of quantitative approaches, qualitative approaches and more recently mixed-method approaches. Methodological approaches and positions concern a researcher's means of gaining knowledge about the world and the best ways to go about this (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Hermeneutic methodologies assume that knowledge will be gained through perceiving relationships between phenomena and their contexts (Kearney, 1996). This position does not stress the need for objectivity and independence of interpretations in the formation of knowledge; instead it recognises and encourages subjectivity and reflexivity (Jervolino, 1990). Human action is seen as intentional and these actions and results are seen as including various meanings. Hermeneutics stresses the understanding and interpretation of meaningful processes and phenomena (Ihde, 1971). Understanding actions and accurately representing the meaning of that

action is crucial to ensuring the overall quality of research utilising this methodology (Schwandt, 2000). Therefore the gaining of knowledge is understood as a continuous process in which interpretations and knowledge are renewed. Each interpretation of actions or details has an effect on the interpretation of the whole. This in turn has an effect on the re-interpretations of previous interpretations of the researched phenomena. This produces an ever deepening understanding of the phenomena. This process of the formation of knowledge is known as the hermeneutic circle (Gadamer, 1976). Ricoeur (1970) distinguishes between empathic hermeneutics, aiming at faithful disclosure, and questioning hermeneutics where the researcher may wish to go beyond what someone is saying. Smith and Osborn (2003) advocate a double hermeneutic cycle whereby the researcher attempts to make sense of their own world whilst helping the participants to make sense of theirs in a cyclical process until a deep, shared understanding of these meanings are reached. This methodological position adopts a mainly qualitative approach and views the researcher as the major 'instrument' for data collection (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Smith, 1984). After ontologically, epistemologically and methodologically positioning this research, a case study approach encompassing mainly qualitative methods was selected, along with analytical techniques akin to the hermeneutic cycle. What follows is a detailed exposition of that approach, data gathering techniques and analytical tools employed.

Case Study Research

Noor (2008) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry which uses multiple sources of evidence to investigate contemporary phenomena. Yin (2009) argues that case study research is a useful method when the phenomena to be studied are current; when the researcher does not need to control events; and when the ways in which research questions are posed require an approach that seeks to explore or explain. A detailed examination of the phenomena was required; one that did not seek to change practice (as in action research), but instead explore and explain in great detail the phenomena in their own right. Feagin, Orun and Sjoberg (1991) cite this as an ideal approach when an in-depth, holistic investigation of phenomena is required. Case studies are designed to bring out details from the viewpoint of participants by using multiple sources of data (Stake, 1995).

However, where case study research has been the chosen research method of some of the aforementioned studies, there appear to be issues with regard to drawing generalisations, particularly in the instances where a single case has been the unit of study. Theoretical generalisations (Hamel et al, 1993), of which particular student voice activities are beneficial and why are clouded by the context of the case in question – each case tends to define how beneficial student voice activity is or can be, with only limited anecdotal claims which might be useful to apply to other cases (Davies et al, 2007), and with no real linkage to the management of student voice activity or any frameworks that underpin it. Case study approaches are useful for providing a detailed narrative of phenomena but their limitations include challenges to generalisability (Yin, 2009) and researcher bias (Hansen, 1979).

In my experience of working with schools in the school improvement arena, I have learnt that individual headteachers have very strong views about the quality and robustness of their own management of their own school. I have also learnt from experience of the rareness of headteachers to willingly draw upon the practice of other headteachers unless that practice is considered very worthwhile. A case study approach, taking into account Davies' position and my own subjective view, would create difficulties if only one school was studied. The research questions coupled with my own subjective view were better suited to multiple units of study – several schools, several headteachers. In addition what I wanted to discover was the framework that individual headteachers drew upon along with any commonalities about what underpinned or joined these. A detailed investigation of the phenomena was required. Creating what qualitative research calls 'thick description' (Ryle, 1971; Geertz, 1973; Denzin, 1989; Holloway, 1997; Schwandt, 2001) and developing a narrative and generating meaning would be necessary. A comparison of this thick description across these schools or cases, known as a cross case comparison (Yin, 2004), was also required to answer the research questions. My exploration of methods and my own subjective views led me to believe that case study methods would be the most suitable and appealing methods. However it must be acknowledged that there are limitations in this approach – using five research sites did not lend itself well to generalising findings from this study. Also, the deep

analysis required with each headteacher to generate data that would sufficiently answer the research questions took a long time; thus it was only possible to work with one headteacher from each school. This opened up the possibility of challenges to the reliability of the data and bias. Finally a case study approach here might answer questions relevant to one school and its context without having relevance to other schools.

Instrumental Approach

Stake (1995) identifies two different approaches to case study methodology in identifying both the intrinsic and instrumental approaches to case study design. The intrinsic approach, where the researcher has an intrinsic interest in the case itself; the instrumental approach, when the case is used to understand more than itself i.e. the case is instrumental to understanding something else; and further defines the collective approach, when a group of cases are studied, usually from an instrumental approach to each individual case that make up the collective (Stake, 1995). I was interested in each case in its own right, but I was more interested in what each case could offer above and beyond itself – what each case could offer in answering something much deeper. Following Stake's assertion, an instrumental approach to case study research was adopted. This affected the selection of research sites – with an intrinsic approach the case or research site would have been well known prior to study, with the researcher having an intrinsic interest in it; with the instrumental approach the case was sought with a view to maximizing the potential of the study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009).

Sampling Strategy and Research Sites

Some key figures and proponents of case study research including Yin, Stake and Tellis assert that a single case, or group of cases if the multi-case approach is adopted, should be selected to maximise what can be discovered in the time available (Feagin et al, 1991; Stake, 1995; Tellis, 1997; Yin, 2009). Each research site was selected to maximise the potential of the study.

During the period of this study I had been employed in London, working in a variety of roles which incorporated school improvement and the management of children's services. These roles gave me direct access to schools, headteachers and sources of information pertaining to student voice activity. I sent an email to over one hundred schools containing the background to the study along with an 'Expression of Interest' letter (Appendix 1.1). Several schools made contact with me to discuss this further, via telephone or email and, as a result twenty one schools returned their expression of interest form.

I believe it is important to fully articulate the process by which the schools were selected, to aid reliability in this study (Hansen, 1979). My own subjective views informed the selection criteria I used to reduce these twenty one schools down to a more manageable number. This involved comparing and contrasting what was recorded in each school's self-evaluation form (DfES & Ofsted, 2004; Great Britain. *Education Act 2005*). Where nothing substantive was recorded pertaining to student voice activity, a school was rejected. This process informed my decision to remove six schools from the list, leaving fifteen schools. It is at this stage that I copied everything student voice related into one document and grouped the various activities into broad areas. Ten areas emerged, some very specific such as healthy schools (DfES & NHSS, 2004) and assessment for learning (DCSF, 2008b); others more vague such as pupil conducting research and training programmes. One summative document containing all the evidence from the fifteen schools was logged (Appendix 2.1).

I used three categories derived from the literature – student voice activity which was mainly focused on student gains (Carver, 1997; Fielding & Bragg, 2003); student voice activity which was mainly focused on improving an aspect of the school (Pickering, 1997; Fielding, 2001); and, student voice activity which did both. I had a short discussion with the linked school inspector/school improvement partner for each of these fifteen schools. The nature of that discussion centred on which schools would they rank top in each of the three categories listed above (they were asked to consider whether the list of activities was an accurate representation in their view; how positive they felt about the management of that list of activities; and, whether

they could anecdotally evidence anything positive that came from that list of activities for the students or the school).

Based on those informal discussions and notes that I made I selected the school which had listed the most activities which appeared to mainly benefit students. I then selected the school which had listed the most activities which appeared to mainly benefit the school. I also selected the school which had listed activities that struck a balance between benefits for students and school. I had selected three schools where it appeared that the management of student voice activity was markedly different, or at least it appeared that the drivers or the values that underpinned that management might be slightly different. Each school was a primary school.

Twelve schools remained on the list. I selected the only secondary school in the list and the only junior school in the list. The justification for the secondary school was that its list of activities included students' involvement in the rebuilding of the school, something that was unique amongst the original group of twenty one schools. The justification for selecting the junior school was that the style of writing used to describe their list of activities was markedly different from all the other schools. The style was very personalised and included references to values regarding students' rights. It is important to note that I had, in my view, positive relationships with all headteachers who expressed an interest.

I then sent an email containing a 'Statement of Intent' (Appendix 1.2) to five of those schools. Being a case study with an instrumental approach (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009), my intention was to select a range of schools consciously and deliberately to maximise the potential of what could be learnt in the time available. One summative document detailing the characteristics of the five schools was logged (Appendix 1.5).

Ethics

Hammersley (2000) asserts that ethical responsibility is something that must be accepted by the researcher; this responsibility includes formally ensuring all obligations with regards to ethics are fulfilled. A number of frameworks exist which

promote ethical approaches to research but in the field of social science it is argued that adherence to strict rules and guidelines can actually compromise the research – something which is termed an ethical dilemma (Punch, 1998; Swain et al, 1998). Small (2001) asserts that strict ethical approaches taken from natural science do not translate well to the field of social science, a claim which is supplemented by Goodwin et al (2003) who clarify that ethical dilemmas tend to arise because of the context-specific nature of social research. Homan and Bulmer (1982) argue that in extreme cases it can become impossible to actually conduct social research – this is because such strict ethical procedures can in some cases block the researcher from gathering or analysing data whilst in other cases, according to Punch (1998) the impact of the researcher on the research can create bias and reactivity, both of which can be unethical in the strictest sense (Punch, 1998). This is a challenging area, particularly as the methodological approach of this study requires a cycle of human interactions. The approach dictates that the study should select research sites that maximise the potential of what can be learnt; something which imposes priorities on the research. The choice of research topic is also informed by my own systematic bias or belief towards student voice activity and the effective management of it. Alderson (2004) offers solutions to these ethical dilemmas. These include acknowledging the dilemmas in the first instance; a move away from rigid ethical frameworks to more fluid ones which are based in commitments that uphold the principals of social research; commitments that uphold the rights of participants as well as respect for them; and a commitment to ongoing ethical decision making during the research.

I took into account this commitment-based approach to tackling ethical dilemmas, but still felt a need for some ethical structures that would ensure I met my ethical obligations. The Social Research Association (2003) advocate designing and applying an ethics protocol which can be used and monitored throughout the course of the research journey. This protocol should include elements such as the purpose of the study; rationale for it; research design; risks and benefits; selection of participants; informed consent; data protection; confidentiality and anonymity; monitoring schedule and dissemination. A ‘Case Study Protocol’ (Appendix 1.4) was

devised for this study. It included many of the aforementioned areas to ensure ethical responsibility was achieved.

Consent

Each headteacher was emailed a research schedule (Appendix 1.3) at the start of the study. Verbal consent was sought from each, confirmed by telephone. I informed each headteacher that they could withdraw from the study at any time or withdraw from sections of the study. At each meeting the status of that consent was checked with each headteacher.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

All schools involved were informed that they as an organisation and as an individual headteacher would have their details anonymised in the final report. All references to names (both students and adults), places, locations, companies, or unique characteristics that could aid a reader in identifying the school or headteacher would be removed. Where they could not be removed they would be altered. Wengraf (2001) associates different types of anonymity on a continuum from weak to strong. In this study strong anonymity has been used – that whereby the participants would find it almost impossible to identify themselves in the final report. Each headteacher was given several opportunities at each stage of the research process to alter items that they felt were confidential.

Case Study Protocol

A copy of a 'Case Study Protocol' (Appendix 1.4) was given to each headteacher which they signed and dated – I countersigned this agreement. Yin (2004; 2009) insists that a case study protocol must contain an overview of the case study, field procedures, case study questions, and a guide for the case study report. This Case Study Protocol detailed the justification for the research design, the research tools to be used and the order of use and an outline for the final report. A case study protocol

which accurately reflects the research journey is a technique used to strengthen reliability in case study research (Stake, 2005)

Approach to Gathering Data

A three stage procedure was employed to collect data: an initial questionnaire; a semi structured interview with a respondent validation exercise; an analysis and interpretation cycle encompassing the hermeneutic cycle along, cross-case comparison and a critical review of the draft report. This chain of evidence (Yin, 2009) was outlined in the case study protocol. Establishing a chain of evidence was a technique employed to aid construct validity (Jary & Jary, 1995). The initial questionnaire was sent out to five schools to collect quantitative data regarding student voice activity in their school, specifically ratings regarding how beneficial certain student voice activity was for their students and for their school. There was also an open-ended question designed to collect qualitative data. The answers formed the basis of a semi-structured interview with each headteacher, used to gain further insights on what those benefits were and why they were beneficial. The questions being asked were also used to allow headteachers to expand upon their management of student voice activity. A respondent validation exercise also took place. A detailed analysis cycle commenced involving primary analysis of the interview transcripts followed by a pattern matching and explanation building exercise – all involving further visits and interviews with headteachers. A draft report containing a write up of the results of the explanation building exercise was sent out to each headteacher for their comments. A cross-case comparison exercise was conducted on all five draft reports to draw out recurring themes and commonalities. A final draft report of the cross-case comparison exercise was sent to all headteachers for final comments. What follows is a detailed exposition of each data gathering and analysis procedure.

Procedure 1 – Initial Questionnaire

Sudman and Bradburn (1982) argue that questionnaires and survey methods are suitable methods when statistical data needs to be generated about a proportion of a

population. Yin (2009) argues that surveys and questionnaires are useful methods when the phenomena to be studied are current; when the researcher does not need to control events; and when the ways in which research questions are posed require an approach that seeks to explore or enumerate. The phenomena to be studied were current and control of events or behaviours was not required and the research questions required some exploration but not enumeration. Questionnaires were used in this study – an initial questionnaire designed to collect a small amount of quantitative data and one piece of qualitative data. The purpose here was to develop a structure or common format as the basis of a semi-structured interview.

An initial questionnaire (see Appendix 2.2) was designed, based on the broad areas from the school Self 'Evaluation Form' (DfES & Ofsted, 2004; Great Britain. *Education Act 2005*), contrasting exercise (see Appendix 2.1). The justification was that it would give headteachers questions on some concrete areas they were already familiar with as some would exist in their school. This questionnaire was designed to get headteachers to differentiate between areas that were beneficial to the school or to students. This initial questionnaire was sent to each headteacher, called a 'Student Voice Activity Questionnaire'. This research tool will now be referred to as the SVAQ. Sudman and Bradburn (1984) distinguish between the use of closed questions – normally designed to produce quantitative data, and open ended questions usually designed to produce qualitative data. The SVAQ contained ten closed questions and one open ended question. Each of the ten closed questions enquired whether a particular student voice activity was in place at the school; for example the first question asked 'Does your school have a student council or pupil parliament?' with the options of either circling 'yes' or 'no'.

The SVAQ (Appendix 2.2) instructed each headteacher – where they answered 'yes' to give a rating for how beneficial that student voice activity was for (a) the students and (b) the school. The ratings scale used a range from '1 = not beneficial' through to '4 = extremely beneficial'. Although it might be pointed out that such an approach could exemplify what Cruddas (2001) calls the 'myth of liberal authority' and what Fielding (2004) describes as the disempowering nature of teachers speaking on behalf of children, this study is located very firmly in the context of headteachers'

management of student voice activity. It is headteachers' views that this research centres on. There was also one open ended question asking headteachers to list any other student voice activities and associated benefits. The SVAQ was designed specifically so headteachers could talk about their management of student voice activity in their school and therefore was targeted at answering the main research question.

Procedure 2 – Semi-Structured Interviews

Structured interviews are formalised with a set number of questions, designed by the researcher, and asked in the same way to different participants. Unstructured interviews are unformalised with no set questions, which allow the participant and researcher to explore any area unaided (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Semi-structured interviews lie somewhere in between, having a common format or theme but being flexible enough to allow for additional questions to be asked at the interview. This helps the researcher maintain a degree of control but is still flexible enough to allow for additional areas to be explored as a result of what the participant actually says.

Topics or themes of exploration need to be considered well in advance of the interview, with some rationale behind them (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). There are advantages to using this technique; a large amount of detail can be generated through them along with a flexibility and sensitivity to respond proactively to the participants' interpretations. However they cannot guarantee the honesty of participants (Mitchell & Jolley, 2010), nor can cause and effect be inferred through them. Open ended questions are difficult to compare across participants unless a common theme or thread runs through such questioning. If a common theme or thread does not run through each semi structured interview this presents a challenge to validity. Respondent validation is one way of guarding against this (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Research bias and reactivity are threats to semi-structured interviews. Yin (2009) maintains that interview questions tend to be less focused on structured queries and more akin to guided conversations. Rubin and Rubin (1995) echo this view claiming that a researcher should ask more fluid questions whilst endeavouring to pursue a consistent line of enquiry, thus aiding validity.

Semi-structured interviews were used in this study so that a consistent format could be used along with the flexibility to explore other areas. This is important as the lack of explicit frameworks for managing student voice activity coupled with the inconsistent views of what student voice activity actually, open up the possibility of different interpretations. The research tools had to be flexible enough to capture those differences whilst still maintaining some consistent format for the purposes of comparisons and generalisability.

Once the SVAQ had been completed, returned and analysed I contacted each headteacher to arrange a date and time to conduct a semi-structured interview. Klandermans and Staggenborg (2002) assert that the technique of semi-structured interview, as opposed to structured interview, can help the researcher to unearth more complex data which include information, themes and categories of analysis. For the respondent it can help them generate more complex data through elaboration, clarification, challenge or the recontextualising of understandings.

Each headteacher was informed (via a note on the bottom of the SVAQ and through the Case Study Protocol) that the semi-structured interview would be loosely based on their answers from the SVAQ. Where they answered 'yes' to a question they would be asked to discuss and explain in detail the reasons why they rated that student voice activity for the students and the school the way they did. The semi-structured interview was conducted in each headteacher's office at the school and lasted no more than two hours.

The results from each SVAQ were used as a scaffold for the semi-structured interview. Where a headteacher had indicated in the SVAQ that a student voice activity existed in their school, they were asked to describe in detail that student voice activity and were also asked to discuss the benefits rating given. Specifically they were asked to frame those benefits in terms of what students gained by experiencing that activity or being part of it. They were then asked to frame those benefits in terms of what those students gained from the results or outcomes of that activity. The same process was repeated for the organisation framed in terms of the benefits the school

gained from students experiencing that student voice activity and the benefits the school gained from the outcome of that student voice activity. This formed a consistent line of enquiry across all five schools.

Each headteacher was informed that the interview would be taped using a digital recorder and the interview would be transcribed. The semi-structured nature would allow for additional questions to arise as each interview developed. Yin (2009) maintains that interviews questions in case study research tend to be less focused on structured queries and more akin to guided conversations. Rubin and Rubin (1995) echo this view claiming that a researcher should ask more fluid questions whilst endeavouring to pursue a consistent line of enquiry. The SVAQ provided structured queries which were consistently asked across all cases. I also asked a number of questions which could be considered less rigid, more fluid type questions. The semi-structured interview was designed specifically so headteachers could talk about their management of student voice activity in their school and therefore was targeted at answering the main research question.

Respondent Validation Exercise

The Case Study Protocol stated that each semi-structured interview would be transcribed and returned to the headteacher within one month (See Appendix 2.4 for a partial example from School 5). They were given the opportunity to view the transcript to ensure what they said during the interview and what they meant was accurately captured in the transcription, in effect an opportunity for respondent validation (Kirk & Miller, 1986). The technique of respondent validation, or member validation, in qualitative research can aid validity at different stages and help minimise researcher bias (Silverman, 2000).

The use of respondent validation was employed firstly as a checking measure – to ensure what headteachers had said and what they'd meant and what was transcribed actually matched – a technique employed here to minimise researcher bias. Barbour (2001) is highly critical of validation techniques in qualitative research – questioning whether over zealous use has led to a back-to-front approach with technical fixes.

However, in this study the technique was also used to create the opportunity for headteachers to further expand upon any answers given; opening up the possibility of generating new or richer sources of data – a method by which research reactivity could be minimised. In case study research design research reactivity is a real threat to construct validity (Schwartz & Schwartz, 1955). The opportunity for headteachers to review and update their transcript, without me being present was one method used to limit the impact of researcher reactivity (See Appendix 2.5 for a partial example from School 5).

Procedure 3 – Analysis Cycle

An analyses and interpretation cycle commenced. Each validated transcript was analysed and interpreted. This was the lengthiest stage of the data collection and analysis process involving a number of exchanges between myself and each headteacher and the data. A ‘benefits grid’ was used as a tool to help organise and manage the data from the validated transcript (See Appendix 2.3 for a completed example from school 5). Benefits from experiencing a student voice process and the outcomes of it were recorded for the students and the school. When a benefit was discovered in the transcript, the statement from whence it came was highlighted in yellow (See Appendix 2.6 for a partial example from school 5). This included: firstly, any significant statement which directly stated a benefit; secondly, any significant statement which linked to the management of student voice activity; and thirdly, any significant statement which illustrated a benefit. This first part was a process of transcription, not analyses or interpretation. The second and third parts were more subjective and required me to interpret and use inference. In order to maintain internal validity of the results, Yin (2009) insists that the use of inference in case study research must be considered very carefully by the researcher; all explanations and rival explanations must be considered and exhausted before any informed inference is made. This is because substantiated rival explanations pose a threat to internal validity.

This benefits grid along with the transcript (with indicators of where in the transcript the benefit was discovered) was then returned to the headteacher who was asked to

check both documents. The headteacher was also informed at this stage that their validated transcript could now not be changed but was offered the opportunity to add, adjust or delete benefits from the benefits grid. Alongside this they were asked to substantiate any changes to the benefits grid: whether it was my misinterpretation of the transcript; the benefit existed but it could not be inferred from the transcript; or if aspects of the benefits grid did not present a true reflection. The benefits grid had its place in the chain of evidence and was a method for organising, managing and presenting the data at this stage.

Primary Analysis

I analysed each significant statement that was highlighted in yellow. Under each highlighted block of text I made some notes – the intention here was to try and succinctly restate what the headteacher had already stated. In some instances this was a more succinct way of saying the same thing; in other instances I inferred what I believed they were trying to say; in other instances I posed a question in the form of ‘are you trying to articulate x here?’; and in other instances I noted down that I did not really understand what lay behind the statement. These notes were written in red text underneath each highlighted statement (See Appendix 2.7 for a partial example from school 5). This analysed transcript, with yellow highlighted statements and red text underneath, was returned to the headteacher who was asked to give their interpretation or view of each red text statement. A second interview was conducted at the school with the headteacher. This involved a discussion of my interpretations (my red text statements) and their interpretations of it (their adjustments to the red text statements) and my interpretations of their interpretations, set within the context of the entire transcript. A dialogue ensued where these interpretations were queried until we got to a point where we both accepted the headteacher’s final interpretation – a red text statement that articulated the yellow highlighted quote it was associated with. These exchanges and dialogic endeavours involved exhausting rival explanations; aiding internal validity. It must be noted at this point that several yellow highlighted statements were ‘un-highlighted’ as we reached agreement that some statements actually did not really say anything at all. This procedure was used to generate an additional source of data; one which could be used for triangulation.

Pattern Searching and Pattern Matching

I compared and contrasted each red statement with its associated yellow highlighted text, along with other red-yellow pairs, searching for any patterns or commonalities or similarities. I then reread the entire transcript again and repeated this exercise. Eventually after many cycles patterns or categories emerged – words and phrases which were indicative of or could be closely associated with power, purpose, participation, and potential. Where the pattern matched I highlighted this category in blue and counted the number of incidents of each pattern (See Appendix 2.8 for a partial example from school 5). This analysed transcript, with yellow highlighted statements, associated red text underneath, and blue highlighted categories along with a count of incidents was returned to the headteacher. A third interview took place where the pattern searching and pattern matching exercise was discussed. A dialogue ensued as to whether any other patterns existed and whether the ones that did were matched correctly until we got to the point where we accepted the headteacher's final interpretations on patterns or categories, and agreed on the number of incidents. Pattern matching is a technique in case study research to aid internal validity (Yin, 2009). This procedure was used to generate an additional source of data; one which could be used for triangulation.

Explanation Building

For each pattern or category I utilised the analytical technique of explanation building (Yin, 2009). Several steps were followed to construct statements:

1. I constructed a statement to explain what the role of the category or pattern was in that statement;
2. I constructed a statement to explain the category or pattern in the context of the yellow highlighted statement that incident derived from;
3. I constructed a statement to explain that incident in the context of the area of the transcript it came from, in particular how it related to the category or pattern;

4. I constructed a statement to explain that incident of the category or pattern in the context of the whole transcript;
5. All statements from each of the above steps were grouped together;
6. A draft report containing each category or pattern along with their associated statements or explanations was constructed.

This draft report was sent to each headteacher for them to review. A fourth interview took place where the explanation building exercise was discussed. A dialogue ensued as to whether the statements and explanations accurately reflected both our interpretations of each of the categories and patterns. This continued until we got to the point where we accepted the headteacher's final explanations, discounting all other rival explanations and agreed on the narrative. Explanation building is a technique in case study research to aid internal validity (Yin, 2009). This procedure was used to generate an additional source of data; one which could be used for triangulation. These explanations and their associated quotes formed a draft report for each school.

Individual Case Draft Report

Each school received an individual case draft report. A section was devoted to each of the four patterns or category which emerged. A section was devoted to power along with power quotes, associated statements and explanations that had been built and agreed. Another section was devoted to purpose along with purpose quotes, associated statements and explanations that had been built and agreed. A further section was devoted to participation along with participation quotes, associated statements and explanations that had been built and agreed. A final section was devoted to potential along with potential quotes, associated statements and explanations that had been built and agreed. Each headteacher reviewed the report for their school and used this opportunity for final comments.

Cross-Case Comparison

Using all five draft reports I utilised the analytical technique of cross-case comparison (Yin, 2009). All five draft reports were compared and contrasted. This comparison exercise involved the cross referencing of data across all cases. Pattern searching and pattern matching techniques were utilised along with comparisons of explanations listed in each report. Different aspects of each category were cross-compared. The cross-case comparison exercise was used specifically to draw out commonalities across the cases with regards to power, purpose, participation and potential. It assisted in answering the supplementary research questions (a) to (d) and contributed to answering the main research question.

Critical Review of Final Draft Report

I then utilised the validating technique of engaging the participants in a critical review of the final draft report (Yin, 2009). Each headteacher was asked to critically review it and corroborate the evidence and essential facts of the study. There were no disagreements with this report and each headteacher was 'happy' and in agreement with the conclusions drawn. Methodological triangulation according to Denzin (1984) is the process by which a range of approaches are employed to increase confidence of the interpretation of data. A range of techniques were used to triangulate information in this study. The critical review of the final draft report by participants was a technique employed to aid this.

Validity

All research methodologies have to take account of challenges to validity: construct; internal; external and issues of reliability (Hansen, 1979; Peltó & Peltó, 1978). Each methodology impacts on, and creates issues around validity and reliability. Internal validity; the causal relationship between two events is required if the case study design is explanatory – where it sets out to explain causality in the first place. The researcher must consider the role of using inference in case study research, asking whether all possibilities or rival explanations have been considered and exhausted

before making an informed inference from one event to another. Other analytic strategies to protect against threats to internal validity include the use of pattern matching, explanation building, addressing rival explanations and using logic models (Yin, 2009). In this study a lengthy explanation building exercise was utilised to explain patterns in the data (discussed above). This process involved several follow-up interviews with each headteacher to build explanations and address rival explanations in an attempt to reduce challenges to validity and aid internal validity. However, it must be acknowledged that one headteacher from each school was the key source of data for that school, opening up the possibility for their version of the truth to be what they want the public to hear – a distorted truth – as opposed to a more accurate representation of the truth.

Construct validity; the establishment of correct operational measures for the concepts being studied is an area of great difficulty for the case study research design. Data collection methods in research must be able to accurately reflect what is being studied, present a true reflection of a person's view or a sound portrayal of an event (Jary & Jary, 1995). Measures must be taken to minimise all opportunities for distortion. A number of tactics exist to increase construct validity in case study research: the use of multiple sources of evidence; establishing a chain of evidence; and key informants reviewing the draft case study report (Yin, 2009). In this study headteachers were the sole source of evidence and were also the key informants who reviewed the draft case study report from their school. This presents challenges to construct validity. However a detailed chain of evidence was established – described in the data gathering and analysis section – so that the entire process could be audited and repeated.

Reactivity and Triangulation

In case study research reactivity is a threat to construct validity because of the unintended reaction of participants on being observed or on being in a study (Schwartz & Schwartz, 1955). They may behave differently because they know they are being studied and they may react differently to their natural behaviour. Researchers can not be truly unobtrusive and so there are always opportunities for

reactivity. Being a school improvement professional along with knowing each headteacher offered the possibility for research reactivity as each headteacher could have told me what they wanted me to hear or what they thought I should hear. It also gave rise to the possibility for each headteacher to withhold information thus threatening construct validity. Yin (2009) asserts that other approaches like action research or ethnography can be more reactive than case study research (Yin, 2009). It is here that the importance of triangulation is highlighted. It is essential for minimising reactivity, and therefore key to strengthening construct validity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; De Vos, 1988). The follow-up interviews which consisted of the respondent validation exercise, pattern matching exercise, explanation building exercises, and review of individual draft report exercise enabled the gathering of several streams of data, albeit from the same source. These sources of data were then cross referenced in a process of single case triangulation. The technique of cross-case comparison (Yin, 2009) was utilised to compare and contrast all data from each school with every other school. Here is where the strongest triangulation took place as it cross referenced data from five unique sources.

Generalisability

External validity; the generalisability of results of a study to other settings is frequently criticised in case study methodology. Walker (1993) asserts that case study research in an individual case can lead to a situation or study which is wholly acceptable to those involved but in reality is only marginally linked to the truth. To counter the notion of generalisability, as having a very low priority in qualitative research, Schofield (1993) redefines generalisability in case study research as its 'fittingness' to other situations. Yin (1984) clearly differentiates between statistical generalisation and analytical generalisation. He cites analytical generalisation as a robust method whereby previously developed theory from other case studies can be used as a template to compare results of a case study. Thus the fittingness of results to other situations can provide external validity to a study. Schofield (1993) supplements this, citing 'comparability' and 'translatability' of the results of a case to other situations to provide external validity. Stake (1995) argues for empirically grounded generalisation for case study research, or what he terms 'naturalistic

generalisation'. In this he cites the relationship between a case study findings and a reader's own experience adding to the understanding of the phenomena. In a single case study design generalising theory to other situations has the potential to strengthen external validity. In a multiple-case study research design replication logic can be used to strengthen external validity (Stake, 1995; Tellis, 1997; Yin, 2009). A theory developed from the results of one case can be replicated to more cases where the theory has specified that the same results should occur. Once complete the results might provide strong support for the theory thus making the theory more generalisable. The analysis cycle was utilised to triangulate data from within a single case in an attempt to establish some plausible truths relating to the implicit framework an individual headteacher drew upon to manage student voice activity. The technique of cross-case comparison was used to triangulate data from five unique sources in an attempt to establish plausible commonalities and complementary constructions of truth.

Reliability

Reliability: the dependability of research methods and accuracy of conclusions so that another researcher following the same procedures in conducting the same case study would achieve the same results and conclusions is the final test (Hansen, 1979). In case study design the goal of reliability is to minimise or completely eradicate errors and researcher bias (Hansen, 1979). The great difficulty in case study research design is its lack of ability to be audited in a systematic and objective manner.

Several tools exist to strengthen reliability in case study research. They include the development of a case study protocol (Stake, 1995; Tellis 1997, Yin, 2009) and the development of a case study database. The case study protocol contains an overview of the case study; field procedures; case study questions; a guide for the case study report; the research instruments, procedures and rules for using them (Yin, 1994). A case study protocol (Appendix 1.4) was designed and employed in this study.

However it must be acknowledged that there is a potential for bias in interviewing an individual headteacher as the sole source of data from each school along with the fact that each respondent was known to me.

Conclusion

There is a growing body of work on student voice. Several studies, conferences, journal articles and research papers have come into being over the past ten years. Some key figures in this group (although not an exhaustive list) who have made significant contributions, including their own studies and critical reviews of others include Fielding (2002; 2004), Lodge and Read (2003), Rudduck and Flutter (2000), Flutter and Rudduck (2004), Mitra (2003; 2004) and Carver (1997). In the main qualitative research approaches were taken. I gave consideration to a range of methods and techniques which are usually grouped together or associated with either quantitative or qualitative research approaches. Yin (2009) asserts a number of conditions which should be considered when selecting the most appropriate research method or technique. They include whether the phenomena to be studied are historical or current; whether or not the researcher needs to control events; and the way in which the research question is posed (Yin, 2009). I took all three points into consideration whilst examining different approaches before choosing the approach – an instrumental case study involving five schools. A detailed exposition of gathering, analysing and interpreting data along with explanation building has been given. A questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. Along with a respondent validation exercise, a cycle of interviews were employed to build explanations from the data. Explanations from all sites were compared and contrasted to establish patterns. Finally a report was written which was critically reviewed by each headteacher. The methodology selected and the approaches to gathering and analysing data were selected and justified as the most appropriate to answer the main research question – what is the implicit framework headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity. The key sources of data were headteachers who made sense of their own worlds through analytical cycles with the researcher. Headteachers' perspectives on the roles of power, purpose, participation and potential were sought, compared and contrasted to draw out the implicit framework they drew upon to manage student voice activity. The student voice activity questionnaire; the semi-structured interviews; and, the analytical cycles drew out a range messages relating to a conceptual framework. It is to the meaning in the

messages we now turn with an in-depth cross-case comparison, triangulation exercise and summary of results.

Chapter Five: Results and Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter the results of this study are presented and discussed. A chain of evidence is described throughout this chapter. The results from the Student Voice Activity Questionnaires are presented in Table 1.1 with a discussion on the range of activity in each school and how beneficial each headteacher rated each activity for the students and for their school. Semi-structured interviews followed up by a respondent validation exercise are discussed citing the consistent line of enquiry across all five schools along with the acknowledgement of resulting questions and dialogue. A rich narrative emerged from each school, samples of which are contained with the appendices (Appendix 3). The results from the analysis cycle are presented and discussed. Four categories emerged: power, purpose, participation and potential. Table 1.2 presents the incidence of each across all five schools. The emergence of traits within each of the four categories is acknowledged through individual case reports followed by the cross-case comparison exercise. Power traits are expressed as: the power to initiate student voice activity; regulating power; owning power; and, the power to terminate student voice activity. Purpose traits are depicted as: the tenet of student voice activity; intended change; the lived-experience; and, resulting outcomes. Participation traits are illustrated as: the accessibility of student voice activity; the ability to choose to take part; and, the equitableness of it. Potential traits are expressed as: students' agency; their sense of belonging; and, gains in developing and apply new skills. Table 1.3 presents the incidence of each trait from across the five schools. Quotes from semi-structured interviews and patterns, explanations, interpretations and narrative from the cross-case comparison exercise along with explicit links to current literature are used to present power, purpose, participation, potential and their respective traits. A detailed exposition of each is given with a definition, several examples and a summary. This chapter concludes by appraising the technique of cross-case comparison in triangulating data across the five cases to draw out commonalities and plausible truths. They include: the reaffirmation of power, purpose, participation and potential in line with findings from the pilot study;

the identification and descriptions of the concepts of initiation, regulation, ownership and termination under the umbrella of power; the identification and descriptions of the concepts of tenet, intent, experiences and outcomes under the umbrella of purpose; the identification and descriptions of the concepts of accessibility, choice and voice-equity under the umbrella of participation; and, the identification and descriptions of the concepts of agency, belonging and competences under the umbrella of potential;

Results from the Initial Questionnaire

The SVAQ from every school revealed that each school had more than half the student voice activities in their school. Some activities were rated as not beneficial (1) right through to extremely beneficial (4). Table 1.1 lists these cumulative scores; it shows that some schools rated everything as very beneficial (3) or extremely beneficial (4) whilst others gave lower scores. It also shows that some had a leaning towards student voice activity being more beneficial for the school and some more beneficial for the students. In two cases the benefits for the school and its students were equal; however one school rated their activities significantly higher in terms of how beneficial they actually were. This implies that each school manages their range of student voice activity slightly differently and suggests the possibility of headteachers drawing upon differing frameworks.

Table 1.1

	Questions (out of 10) where 'yes' this student voice activity exists in this school.	Minimum cumulative benefits rating (if all were rated '1' – Not beneficial)	Maximum cumulative benefits rating (if all were rated '4' – Very beneficial)	Actual cumulative benefits ratings for students	Actual cumulative benefits ratings for school	Difference
School One	9	9	36	23	23	Equal
School Two	10	10	40	40	40	Equal
School Three	7	7	28	19	24	+5 in favour of school
School Four	8	8	32	28	24	+4 in favour of students
School Five	7	7	28	15	17	+2 in favour of school

Results from the Semi-Structured Interviews and Respondent Validation

Although the semi-structured interviews used a consistent line of enquiry across all five schools, due to similar questions being asked in the same way, resulting questions and further explorations produced markedly different data from all five schools. This method tended to produce some lengthy responses culminating in a rich narrative from each school. (Extracts from each transcript can be found in Appendix 3)

Results from the Analysis Cycle

Primary analysis, pattern matching and explanation building revealed four repeating categories or patterns across all five schools. They were: power; purpose; participation; and, potential. Table 1.2 lists their incidence across the schools.

Table 1.2

	Power Quotes	Purpose quotes	Participation quotes	Potential quotes
School 1	19	27	13	9
School 2	20	35	10	18
School 3	12	20	12	18
School 4	18	19	12	13
School 5	12	20	15	24

Results from the Individual Case Draft Report

Each school received an individual case draft report. A section was devoted to power – highlighting all power quotes and the agreed statements from the explanation building exercise. There were also sections devoted to purpose, participation and potential. However within each of these categories were individual traits and themes. Individually they helped to broadly answer each research question. Their definitions are listed below.

Results from the Cross-Case Comparison

Using all five draft individual case reports the analytical technique of cross-case comparison was employed (Yin, 2009). All five were compared and contrasted. This comparison exercise involved the cross referencing of data across all cases. Pattern search and pattern matching techniques were utilised along with comparisons of

explanations listed in each report. Different aspects of each category were cross-compared. A vivid picture emerged of converging themes. Once all power quotes and their associated explanations had been compared and contrasted, four aspects emerged: 'Initiation'; 'Regulation'; 'Ownership'; and, 'Termination'. Once all purpose quotes and their associated explanations had been compared and contrasted, With regards to purpose four aspects emerged: 'Tenet'; 'Intentions'; 'Experiences'; and, 'Outcomes'. Once all participation quotes and their associated explanations had been compared and contrasted, With regards to participation three aspects emerged: 'Accessibility'; 'Choice'; and, 'Voice-equity'. Once all potential quotes and their associated explanations had been compared and contrasted, With regards to potential three aspects emerged: 'Agency'; 'Belonging'; and, 'Competences' (See Appendix 2.8 for a partial example from school 5). Table 1.3 lists their incidence across the schools. Each statement or piece of evidence quoted from each school is referenced thus:

Quote from headteacher (School Number: Quote number)

One hundred and twelve statements or quotes have been drawn upon in this section. Extracts of the transcript from school one – fully analysed and verified – is logged in appendix 3.1; extracts of the transcripts from schools two through five are logged in appendix 3.2 through appendix 3.5 (see Appendix 3).

Table 1.3

	Power Quotes				Purpose Quotes				Participation quotes			Potential quotes		
	Initiation quotes	Control quotes	Ownership quotes	Termination quotes	Tenet quotes	Intent quotes	Experience quotes	Outcome quotes	Accessibility quotes	Choice quotes	Equity quotes	Agency quotes	Belonging quotes	Competence quotes
School 1	7	5	4	3	3	7	5	12	5	6	2	3	3	3
School 2	3	4	12	1	9	5	9	12	2	4	4	2	5	11
School 3	2	6	2	2	7	3	3	7	3	2	7	6	7	5
School 4	6	5	5	2	5	3	5	6	4	4	4	4	2	7
School 5	3	4	4	1	3	5	2	10	2	4	9	9	9	6
Sub TOTALS	21	24	27	9	27	23	24	47	16	20	26	24	26	32
TOTALS	81				121				62			82		

Defining Power

The word power can mean many things and can be interpreted differently; in this analysis it relates to a number of elements. They include: who has authority to start or initiate student voice activity; who owns the process during the lifespan of the activity; who has authority to end or terminate student voice activity; and, who can influence the scope or enforce limitations on the activity.

Power: Initiation

Who has authority to start or initiate student voice activity was a theme that emerged. In each school there was a school council which was one of the main vehicles or focal points for student voice activity. It was the place where students had the ability to start or commence student voice activity. The headteacher at School Two claimed that students had been responsible for initiating a range of student voice activity and that the outcome of one such initiation benefited all:

The pupil parliament has started many initiatives. They started work on ideas for turning a disused space into a flexible learning space. Once they were clearer they invited us into the discussion. That space has been transformed and everyone has benefited. (School Two: 9)

The headteacher at School Four claimed that the school council belonged to the students and they could initiate anything they wanted to:

One of the things about being in a school council is it's their forum - they can raise what they want to. They start the ball rolling. (School Four: 6)

The idea that students could initiate student voice activity, independently of the school was a common theme. For example, in outlining the reasons behind and

describing how the school council initiated an activity to build a swimming pool on the school roof, the headteacher at School One stated:

The coach is always late and they don't like waiting outside in the cold so they took it upon themselves to do something about it. At school council they proposed that we build a swimming pool in the school attic space. They started off with a little bit of research then asked me for help. We got some amazing work out of that activity, but no swimming pool. I mean look at the roof; it's preposterous isn't it. Only through a child's eyes could you image such wonderful possibilities! (School One: 34)

In championing the desirability of 'radical collegiality' between students and teachers, Fielding (1999) highlights the key dilemma that students perceive different issues and perceive issues differently in contrast to that of adults. Here is a good example of these different perspectives, enabled through student voice activity and dialogue. The students did not get what they wanted – a swimming pool – but gained from the experience. The importance of highlighting the 'imagining of such wonderful possibilities' cannot be understated; it is here that Smyth (2006) argues for voice that allows more imaginative solutions to solving problems. In other cases students had already taken part in a student voice activity, the results of which led them to want to initiate another. For example, the headteacher at School Four explained how students had already initiated and conducted their own student voice activity before presenting a resulting proposal and requesting permission to start a new one:

The children wanted music and art to happen in a big way so they asked me could they design an arts block in the school. They had some great ideas and had already talked to lots of other children; I think they said they did sort of do focus group stuff, that's where it came from. (School Four: 22)

What is of real interest here is how the students had already initiated student voice activity with regards to consulting others, without the headteacher, and did so on their own terms – it was they who aspired to see these changes. They then sought

permission from the headteacher to initiate a new student voice activity – one whereby the headteacher would be needed in order to access resources. This is in stark contrast to the assertions of Carroll et al (1999) that students have difficulty initiating student voice activity on their own terms. In explaining how the school council operated at School One the headteacher described how the power to commence student voice activity lay firmly with students; in addition the school used their power to commence student voice activity in that same space:

They set the agenda for the meetings and I always put one item on the agenda.
(School Five: 3)

Headteachers had high regard for their school council and viewed it as something that was owned by students and the place in which students had the power to commence student voice activity – by setting their own agendas. For example, in explaining the way in which the school council operated at School Three the headteacher claimed it was a highly valued body and described how students had their own agenda for which they could set the items:

Yes it's a real high status position. When they meet they have their own agenda but sometimes I give them things that I want them to look into or issues may have come up as a result of problems in the playground, in the classroom.
(School Three: 3)

In addition here the headteacher described how the school also commenced student voice activity by adding its own items to the agenda for the school council to consider. Headteachers initiating student voice activity was a frequent theme. For example, the headteacher at School Three described how they had initiated student voice activity, with regard to making the school rules more user-friendly and meaningful:

When I came here they had a school rule list that had about twelve rules on it. I said 'Who knows the school rules?' and nobody knew the school rules so I said rules have got to be fair but you've got to be able to remember them, even the very little children so I asked the school council to shorten it to 3 rules. So I started that but they did the work. (School Three: 27)

The headteacher at School One described how they initiated an activity designed to solicit student voice; they introduced the Pupil Attitudes to Self and School survey (Williams, Whittome & Watts, 2005) – also known as the PASS survey – and made an explicit link to school improvement:

I wanted every child to do the PASS survey. So we started that activity and it's been running for two years now. It's great! It helps us squeeze out those last drops of improvement. (School One: 55)

The school council was a key vehicle at every school for the commencement of student voice activity. In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to the role of 'power' in terms of the initiation of student voice activity. In these descriptions there were clear examples and illustrations from headteachers of student voice activity being initiated by students, by the school, and by both.

Power: Regulation

Once student voice activity had commenced there was then a time frame or lifespan or duration and space in which the actual activities took place. During this phase the idea that power was mobile or shared, or was transferred between students, other students and the school was prevalent. This form of power had the attributes of scope, limitation and control associated with it – controlling the student voice activity, regulating its scope and limiting others ability to do so during its lifespan. In describing how the school council had conducted surveys and a campaign against the poor quality of school meals, the headteacher at School Five illustrated how students

held power for the duration of this activity, organising the whole thing themselves, in effect controlling it:

Sometimes there was hair in the dinner and they felt that the menus weren't up to scratch and there wasn't enough food. So last year school council surveyed children and they surveyed adults. They organised the whole thing. Two or three others also jumped on the bandwagon because they were particularly irate about it. They kept the campaign going. (School Five: 21)

From this description it can be seen that power was located with the students who exerted control over the activity and kept the campaign going because it was important to them. In addition students had the opportunity to survey adults here. This aligns with Rudduck's (2006) assertion that student voice activity can open opportunities for students and adults to interact in different and more productive ways. Fielding (2004) is a key advocate of the way in which these opportunities can transform the student-teacher dynamic in positive ways. Angus (2006), McIntyre et al (2005), and Wyness (2006) echo Fielding's views although all these advocates have a leaning towards power being centred with students themselves. In this example power, specifically control was centred with students. In describing how students controlled almost all aspects of their healthy tuck shop, and how the school had supplemented this initiative with financial and physical resources, the headteacher at School Two stated:

We provided the initial finance and a finance lead who looked after the account and placed orders on behalf of the pupil parliament. But they sourced the fruit, vegetables, nuts and juices. They set the prices, organised rotas, cashing up, stock control, everything. So it's an initiative they controlled. (School Two: 14)

In School Three the school council looked at other areas of decision making in the school that they wanted to take part in, with a particular focus on an area underpinned by negativity – that of bullying. The students controlled most aspects of this activity, having authority over decisions regarding finances. It is this second aspect where the

headteacher devolved financial authority and control to the students, only affecting the scope in terms of the amount of money involved. This was a very clear example of students controlling student voice activity:

The bullying issue has been looked at in quite some depth through the school council and as a result of what they wanted to develop I put a hundred pounds in a student council budget, so if they needed to purchase anything – resources to develop their ideas – then they have a budget that they can work with.

(School Three: 11)

The intention here would be for students to develop their ideas to address the bullying issue. Describing this power dynamic does not fit easily with the model espoused by radical pedagogy; the idea of presence and absence of power, or the notion that power is given by the powerful to powerless and can be taken back at a later stage (Holland & Blackburn, 1998). A better lens to view this through is Bragg's (2007) 'tool for thinking'; embracing Foucauldian concepts of governmentality. From this perspective power dynamics are more sophisticated, outlining the capacity adults have to govern students to work on their own 'self' or collective 'selves' – in effect students developing a self-managing, self-directing, self-reliant approach to aspects of their lives. This localising of power within individual students, with adults 'governing' or facilitating their conduct is a much better articulation of the above situation. In describing how everyone had come to a shared understanding of the need for more space at the school and how students produced a proposal, the headteacher at School Four declared:

One of the things they raised was space. We didn't have space in the school and everybody was quite happy that we needed to increase the space. So they went off and did some research off their own backs and when they had finished it they presented a proposal to me to build an arts block. (School Four: 21)

This illustrates how control of an activity can be shared and changes over time between students and the school, underpinned by dialogue at different stages. Such co-productions mirror what Bakhtin (1986) and Burke (2007) refer to as the changing

nature of power and supplement this view that control of student voice activity can change over its duration in a healthy, productive way. Taylor and Robinson (2007) in describing such co-productions identify the changing nature of power and shared dialogue between organisation and students, with regard to the sharing and changing of control, but also highlight its counterpart; that of limitation. The notion of students and the school being able to control the scope of student voice activity; in terms of being able to set or apply limits was a recurring theme. For example, in describing how students conducted surveys and produced a tally chart of issues relating to lunchtime staff, the headteacher at School One illustrated how the students controlled the activity and limited access to parts of it, stating:

They did some surveys and a tally chart of the lunchtime staff and which ones were fair and which ones made them unhappy. When I asked to look at some of the surveys they said they were anonymous but I might recognise the handwriting and tell some children off. So I accepted the tally chart and had one to one discussions with those staff. (School One: 41)

The headteacher at School Four described how students were involved in improving teaching and learning up to a point – a structured student voice activity which involved the use of a ratings system at the end of each lesson. However the headteacher explained that students were only allowed to rate certain things. What stands out here is that students were allowed to participate in an activity where they could rate a lesson as something they liked, but were not allowed to rate it as something they did not like. The headteacher stated:

We have a ratings system where the children can give the teachers feedback at the end of every lesson. They do not actually assess the teacher or say I didn't like the lesson or found it boring, but they would say you know well actually they do say whether they liked the lesson, or whether they learned something from it. So we collate that and we use it for professional development. (School Four: 54)

Although access to participate may be there at the initiation of the activity, limits can be imposed and scope changed during the activity. This demonstrates the school's ability to exercise power in limiting the scope of student voice activity during the lifespan of the activity. Each school used tools such as surveys, questionnaires and interviews – some designed by the school, others designed by the students, and others which were commercially available. In illustrating how a range of pupil surveys, questionnaires and interviews were used to gather sources of information for school improvement, the headteacher at School Three claimed that sometimes it was in the best interest of the school not to share some information from a student voice activity; regulating power, limiting scope:

Some bits of information get fed back, both negative and positive. We could be sharing something really great or we may have realised that we need to improve something in the school, and this is how we're going to start to work on it. So yes the children do get to hear about the outcomes, but not all the time. I'd say there are times when it's in our interests not to feed back to them. (School Three: 53)

This last part of the statement parallels the model of student voice engagement for which Lodge and Read (2003) would describe as 'Sources of Information'; where feedback is withheld from students and there is no dialogue to construct shared meaning or deep understanding of issues raised. Pickering (1997) and Fielding (2001) both argue that school leaders require student voice, in terms of these sources of information, as part of the processes that leads to school improvement. However both make clear distinctions between 'sources of information' as a means of control and compliance, and 'sources of information' shared with the community. The headteacher at School Three illustrated both. In describing how students had conducted research into the poor quality of school meals, the headteacher at School Five reflected upon how it had helped the school question ways in which it may have limited students' involvement. In particular the headteacher highlighted how the school may have unintentionally limited or inhibited students:

The way in which the children went about it I thought was absolutely brilliant and for the governors then to have hard evidence was great. What we gained from the process was that we often put barriers up to children being involved in things that matter to them. Sometimes you just get used to things, especially if they don't really affect you like the children's toilets or school dinners but it made us question as a staff what other things might we be missing or what other ways might we be inhibiting the children. (School Five: 36)

In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to the role of 'power' in terms of regulating student voice activity. In these descriptions there were clear examples and illustrations from headteachers of regulation within student voice activity by students, the school and both.

Power: Ownership

Who owns the process during the lifespan of student voice activity and how that balance changes over time was a theme that emerged. In describing the workings of the school council as the vehicle for students to communicate their wants and needs, the headteacher at School Five claimed that there were activities which the students owned:

We have a forum through which children can have a say in the way we run the school, so children have a voice. Children have conducted various bits of research using the council as the vehicle to communicate their wants and needs. There are lots of things which have their name on it; things they own. (School Five: 15)

This reflects Smyth's (2006) assertion that providing students with decision-making power can be a genuinely transformative endeavour; allowing them to bring their cultures, histories, aspirations and stories to the fore. The school council, in this instance, is that vehicle by which students communicate their wants and needs. The idea that students could own student voice activity was a persistent theme. For

example, in describing how students had conducted a survey and produced a tally chart into their feelings towards lunchtime staff, the headteacher at School One claimed that students had owned this activity from start to finish:

I'd say the children owned that activity from start to finish. I came in really at the end, once they'd showed me their tally chart and said they could prove that a certain person wasn't very nice; their words. (School One: 42)

In expanding upon the strategic role of the student governor – part of it's associate governor scheme – the headteacher at School Two claimed that the student was there to ensure students co-owned processes associated with student voice activity, illustrating the idea that school and students could share ownership:

Part of the student governor's brief is to champion pupils at the most strategic level. They ensure pupils have a stake in decision making and co-own some of the associated processes. (School Two: 73)

Smyth (2006) identifies levels of power and their key relationship to student engagement, asserting that the more power students can exercise, the greater their engagement will be in all endeavours. Student governorships or associate governorships place students in a position at the most strategic level of a school. In this example the headteacher outlined how this engagement and role was championed at the highest level. In describing the workings of the school council and in particular how the school raised issues for it to debate, the headteacher at School Four claimed that ownership of current deficits the school faced could be shared with the students to give them a stake in solving them:

So I have initiated certain issues, raised certain issues that I would like the school council as a platform, for them to debate. So they're problems we have as a school like bullying, but this way the children can have ownership of them too and help us solve them. (School Four: 14)

This reflects Smyth's (2006) claim that giving students a voice and drawing on their perspective can provide insights into solving problems and the construction of new reforms. In describing the development of a policy for displays around the school and the involvement of students in that process, the headteacher at School One illustrated how ownership of this activity was something that was exchanged, interchangeable and shared over time, claiming:

The children wanted the school to be more colourful and the displays to be better so we all worked together on that. There was a big conversation that went back and forth as we tried different things. That's helped to get a great policy together. (School One: 65)

In qualifying the value of sharing ownership within student voice activity and the power it had, the headteacher at School Two claimed that a culture of co-ownership and shared dialogue, with respect to student voice activity, had allowed the school and the students to understand the power of working together and its related benefits:

We're at the stage here where we understand the transformative power of working collegially with pupils, and they understand it too. We've engendered a culture of co-ownership and dialogue. That's the greatest benefit! (School Two: 78)

This understanding outlined by the headteacher in School Two parallels the model of student voice engagement for which Lodge and Read (2003) would describe as 'Dialogic'; where the transformative nature of student voice activity helps students, teachers and leaders connect their own narrative to a wider democratic organisational narrative. This statement is also a good articulation of the possibilities and desirability of what Fielding (2004) terms 'radical collegiality' – whereby students work in partnership with teachers to co-create reforms that lead to benefits. In describing the involvement of students in the recruitment and selection process of a new learning mentor, specifically being members of the interview panel, the headteacher at School Five illustrated how ownership of this activity belonged to the school, claiming the final decision was owned by the headteacher:

They asked things like “why do you want be a school learning mentor?”; “Why do you want to work in a school?”; “What’s so good about children?”; It’s from a child perspective. We didn’t tell them to write any notes; they could do if they wanted and then at the end of it, after each interview, when the person had gone, they came and fed back to me. So when we were discussing with them we talked about what sort of person do you think he or she is? What did you like about them and it’s interesting, they said things like he looked kind. One of them said she could speak lots of languages so then she’ll respect us. I just explained obviously that I’d other things to think of when I find somebody but I wanted them to have an input. I told them I’d narrowed it down to two based on what I thought they’d bring to the school but I would own the final decision. And the children were happy with that and said they’d be pleased with whichever one I chose. (School Five: 69)

In describing involvement in the Health Schools Status Award (DfES & NHSS, 2004) the headteacher at School Three was clear about the power dynamic here and the relationship between students and school in terms of who owned this activity:

I don’t know that they realised that they were going through it as much as the staff were on a mission to make sure that we got this status. (School Three: 23)

In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to the role of ‘power’ in terms of ownership of student voice activity. In these descriptions there were clear examples and illustrations from headteachers of student voice activity being owned by students, the school and both.

Power: Termination

Who has the authority to terminate student voice activity was a theme that emerged. The idea that students had the authority to terminate student voice activity was a recurrent theme. For example, in describing mentoring and buddying arrangements

the headteacher at School Three explained how either mentors or mentees could terminate this activity and that the school was guided by the students here:

The mentors come to me and say that their job is finished, that the child they are mentoring is now fine. Or sometimes the child themselves tells me, so that's how we usually bring buddying to an end; we're guided by the children. (School Three: 41)

The headteacher at School One explained how involving students in improving teaching and learning had led to negative ramifications for those involved and as a consequence students chose to terminate that activity:

Quite a few children said their teacher treated them differently and not in a good way, and that led to the school council saying they weren't taking part in teaching interviews anymore. So we don't involve children in improving teaching and learning. (School One: 51)

In describing some initiatives led by the pupil parliament the headteacher at School Two claimed they could terminate student voice activity:

They've also stopped a number of initiatives too. They closed their healthy tuck shop because it wasn't making enough money. (School Two: 41)

The notion that students and the school could work in partnership to negotiate the termination of student voice activity was also a repeating theme. For example, in describing how their fledgling Assessment for Learning (DCSF, 2008b) programme (AfL) had hindered students learning, the headteacher at School Three explained that they, in partnership with the school council had terminated this student voice activity:

The school council decided to vote to stop doing AfL because they couldn't cope with all the targets and it was making lots of children very unhappy. When I mined this further it became apparent that the system in its current form was hindering their learning. So we discussed it and decided to stop it for a half term. (School Three: 15)

In describing how students weren't coping with their role in the Assessment for Learning process and how the school and students terminated this activity, the headteacher at School Four stated:

The children decided that there were too many targets and it got confusing and they weren't able to manage so they asked me if we could stop it. So I agreed but said that a new programme would have to start with fewer more meaningful targets. They agreed! (School Four: 38)

The idea that the school could terminate student voice activity was a prevailing theme. For example, the headteacher at School One used time limits on some student voice activity so that they could terminate them:

I do encourage children to take things on and some of the stuff they come up with is fabulous. But other stuff you know will never work but they want to try it. So I put time limits on some activities so that I can end them. (School One: 40)

In describing how the school council was researching school enterprises, the headteacher at School Four illustrated how students had done some preliminary work but made it clear that they as the headteacher would have to be involved at some stage; setting limits on the activity and illustrating the power to terminate it:

I know they have talked about it and they have got some plans but I don't think they have actually researched enough so they haven't come back to me yet. I have placed a time limit on it though. If it takes too long I'll bring this activity to a close. (School Four: 60)

The transfer, transitioning, owning and sharing of power between students and the school was a key feature during the lifespan of student voice activity but ultimately, student voice activity would come to an end. The headteacher at School One located this in the overall management of the school:

We do our best to involve children in decision making and having a say but they know that ultimately, the final decision lies with me as the headteacher. I always say to them that they're a small piece in a much bigger jigsaw.
(School Five: 70)

This beautifully illustrates the fundamental assumption of Taylor and Robinson (2009) – that clear decisions are made about how power should flow between students and the school. In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to the role of ‘power’ in terms of the ending of student voice activity. In these descriptions there were clear examples and illustrations from headteachers of student voice activity being terminated by students, by the school and both.

Summarising Power

From across the five schools there were 81 quotes and explanations describing the role of power. It is clear that with regard to student voice activity, power lay with the students or with the school and shifted over time and space; ebbing and flowing between students and the school thus reflecting Taylor and Robinson’s (2009) emphasis on the pervasive nature of power. In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to a number of areas which can be grouped under the heading of ‘power’. They included: 21 quotes and explanations describing the initiation of student voice activity; 24 quotes and explanations describing the regulation of student voice activity; 27 quotes and explanations describing the ownership of student voice activity; and, 9 quotes and explanations describing the termination of student voice activity. Students, the school and sometimes a combination of both initiated student voice activity, often through the school council

at each school. Surveys and campaigns were controlled by students, regulating power and limiting the ability of adults to change their decisions. Schools also exercised power by limiting the scope of some activities thereby regulating power. In some instances there were co-productions which demonstrated how the ability to regulate power changed and shifted over time, with dialogue between parties being key to this process. Research was conducted by students who maintained power throughout the life cycle of an activity, in effect owning power for a defined period of time. Co-owning power and the need for dialogue was also highlighted by several schools. Students and the school exercised power by terminating student voice activity; sometimes because an activity had run its course, other times because the activity itself had become negative to one or both parties. Power, as defined here with its four aspects, has a role in the implicit framework headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity.

Defining Purpose

The word purpose can mean many things and can be interpreted differently, in this analysis it relates to a number of elements. They include: whether the activity itself could make a difference or affect change; who the activity principally serves; whom the intentions of the activity serve; and, if any gains came through the experience of the activity or the outcome.

Purpose: Tenet

The tenet of student voice activity, specifically who or what student voice activity is generally and principally about, or who a specific student voice activity serves was a theme that emerged. In generalising about the tenet of student voice activity the headteacher at School Three talked about how it was used to put children at the centre of everything they did:

It's looking at the way we do things and refining what we do so that we're putting the children first, their welfare comes first and we're doing our utmost to ensure that we're being all those things that the children want. So that we're being inclusive, the children are learning that they're progressing to the best of their abilities, that they're happy, the parents are happy and the staff are happy. (School Three: 28)

Whitty and Wisby (2007) claim that amongst schools there is a lack of clarity regarding the purpose of student voice activity. Their claim does not reflect the assertions of headteachers in this study. The headteacher at School Three made a very clear statement about the overarching nature of student voice activity and its principle purpose: to serve students. The headteacher also highlighted that students came first; that their welfare came first and that the school was being everything it could be for them. Through following this principle the headteacher intimated that the students were happy, the parents were happy and the staff were happy. Fielding and Bragg (2003) through their work on students as researchers focus on student voice at the students level and how by starting the principle focus there (students at the centre) it can contribute to positive changes at the school level and further and wider up to the macro level or wider political level. This headteacher's sentiments about student voice activity in general seem to echo this view if we consider parents to be part of the macro or community level. This is what Noyes (2005) would term an 'inside-out' philosophical position on student voice. In describing the principle purpose of student voice activity, the headteacher at School One stated that it should be about involving them in democratic processes where skills developed would serve them later in life but also partly echoed the 'inside-out' philosophical position of students being the principle benefactors of student voice activity, with the school being the secondary beneficiary:

What is it we really want for them – well it's about involving them in democratic processes, its part of active citizenship and skills they will need later in life. It's about involving them in things that are important to them and at a level that's suitable to them. Anything we design or they design

principally has to benefit them. If it also benefits the school well then that's a bonus too. (School One: 2)

In answering questions about a specific student voice activity – an accredited training programme for leadership skills for students, the headteacher at School Four highlighted a duality in that student voice activity can be principally about students whilst at the time benefiting the school:

When I started it I wanted the children and the school to benefit. For the school it's a big tick for us in the SEF. The children gain leadership skills and get to have fun doing sport and leading sessions. (School Four: 30)

The school SEF (DfES & Ofsted, 2004; Great Britain. *Education Act 2005*) was also pinpointed by other schools with regard to student voice activity – the headteacher at School Two clarified this duality further; distinguishing between two types of student voice activity: firstly that which the state forced upon the school; and secondly that which the school did itself. In making this distinction they illustrated how state-enforced student voice activity was something you did or you were punished. They also illustrated how they were involved in other non-enforced student voice activity and the tenet here was to serve students:

You have to consult pupils. It's as simple as that. You don't have a choice anymore. You're forced to do it for the SEF and you get your wrists slapped if you don't. But then that's about school improvement, isn't it? The real measure I suppose is the other stuff you do and we do a lot and that is all about the pupils. (School Two: 21)

Rowe (2003) pointed out that a number of different phrases are used to describe student voice activity and indicated that there was a link between values and political standpoints of adults to the view of what student voice activity should actually be. However the headteacher at School Two clarified different tenets from the state and their own viewpoint. In expanding upon their view of student voice activity, the

headteacher at School Three illustrated how student voice activity was rooted in improvement that was guided by students:

It's about getting your children; your community to take improvement to the next level. (School Three: 60)

Distinguishing between polarising tenets of student voice activity may give the impression that the two are mutually exclusive but the headteacher at School Two illustrated how the two can be mutually inclusive by describing how conducting surveys designed to bring about school improvement benefited students:

We do quite a few surveys with the pupils to generate information that help us improve as a school. Our pupil parliament always has a say in this and it's made clear what the purpose is and how it helps them, but they have to approve it. They have to see the worth in it for them. (School Two: 61)

Highlighting this fact demonstrates that headteachers think about a symbiotic nature in the purpose and practice of student voice activity. That symbiotic nature parallels the work of Hart (1997) who conceptually mapped out student voice activity on a continuum. At one end of the continuum are consultation, child initiated activities and involvement designed to make a real contribution – something that is reflected here. At the other end of this continuum are tokenism, manipulation and decoration – something that was also understood and reflected in generalised worries about tokenism – in summing up their feelings about the purpose or tenet of student voice activity the headteacher at School Five remarked:

I wonder about some of the things we design and whether it's important to us or to them or both or not. (School Five: 32)

However when looking at specific examples it was clear that student voice activity that served the principle purpose of the organisation was also acceptable, particularly when it brought about improvements. The headteacher at School Four was clear that

the organisation should influence student voice activity if the purpose was in the organisation's interest and justified it in terms of pupil gains:

Next thing we would like them to think about is becoming more of an equal school. But this is me though, it's not them. This is something I will get them to take on probably through the School Council. They don't know about it yet. Can I say though that this is purposeful for them even though it's what I want. Everybody benefits from a more equal school. (School Four: 48)

In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to the role of 'purpose' in terms of the tenet of student voice activity. In these descriptions there were clear examples and illustrations from headteachers of student voice activity being principally about students, the organisation, and both.

Purpose: Intentions

The intent of student voice activity, its ability to change things or make a difference was a theme that emerged. The headteacher at School Five talked holistically about the design of student voice activity and clearly stated that student voice activity must be purposeful in so much as it should have the intent of bringing about change:

We try to ensure that anything they do has a purpose, so it has the potential to change things. (School Five: 8)

School councils were a key vehicle for student voice activity and even though one headteacher judged its product as 'not very successful' to date, nonetheless they were incredibly supportive as long as student voice activity was designed to bring about change. The headteacher at School Three stated:

There haven't been that many high-profile initiatives or issues that have come out and had a turn around as a result of the school council but as long as the intention is to change things or make things better for them then as the head I will always support them. (School Three: 10)

The theme of change, or difference making or intended impact was cited by the headteacher at School One. During meetings with the school council the headteacher at School One always sought from the students the purpose of each student voice activity in terms of its intended change:

School council present to me and we discuss what they want to do. I always ask what difference are they trying to make so that we're all clear that every activity has a purpose. (School One: 3)

In describing the purpose or the intent of the work of the school council the headteacher at School Five explained that student voice had to be purposeful in its ability to affect change and claimed that without purpose it would be pointless:

I mean it has to be outcomes focused, what they do on the school council has to help change things or have an impact or else what's the point? (School Five: 13)

The headteacher at School Three distinguished between student voice activity initiated by the school and student voice activity initiated by the students, claiming the latter would always be purposeful because it came from them – by design its intention was to improve things for them. They also stated that students had to believe that student voice activity could bring about change:

If they can't see the activity making a difference or changing things then they're not likely to do it, but those activities come from us. The ones they design always have a purpose because it comes from them and their intention is usually to change things. They have to believe they can change things. (School Three: 5)

The headteacher at School Two was much more specific about change outlining a number of ways student voice activity could or should change things. These included changing the students themselves, changing things for the students and changing things for the school. They equated having a clarified purpose, in terms of the

reasons for change, with fairness and intimated that students and the school gained from the changes brought about by student voice activity, but in different ways:

When we design things we ensure they are about changing things, usually making things better but not always. Sometimes it's about changing the pupils, sometimes it's about changing things for the pupils. Sometimes it's about changing the school. I think as long as it's clear why you're doing things then you're being as fair as you can be. I like to think the school and the pupils can gain in different ways. (School Two: 24)

The headteacher at School Five described the process by which 'Playground Friends' – their playground buddying system – was developed and how the students were involved in training. This student voice activity highlighted the intent of changing things about the students and developing them so that would go on to become part of the playground buddying system:

In their training they underwent what were the principles of a good playground friend, what the purpose was, what you'd have to change about yourself to be one and what skills you might have to develop. (School Five: 42)

The headteacher at School Four talked about the workings of the school council and the fact that they raised issues with it which they felt were important for the school. They were quite explicit in the purpose being to bring about change or improvement for the school but described how the students would be the deliverers of that change:

I raise issues with the School Council which I think are important for the school, things that need to change; things that need to improve. They get to work out how they're going to make the change happen. (School Four: 15)

In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to the role of 'purpose' in terms of the intentions of student voice activity. In these descriptions there were clear examples and illustrations from headteachers of student

voice activity being able to bring about change or make a difference for students, the school, or both.

Purpose: Experiences

The function or experiential journey of student voice activity, the actual lived-experience was a theme that emerged. In discussing the gains or benefits of student voice activity the headteacher at School Three named it 'school improvement' but went on to clarify that this meant improving the experience for students and improving the environment in which they related to each other daily; the importance of the lived-experience:

I would call it school improvement, but not in the academic sense, it's school improvement in its widest sense – do you see? We are looking at ways to improve the environment in which they're working and relating to each other on a day to day basis. It's about improving the experience for them; I think it's really important. (School Three: 12)

Fielding and Bragg (2003) support this fact that student voice activity whose purpose is rooted in the lived-experience or dialogic journey will naturally have outcomes for the school, but they would tend to be less subject to metric analysis – as asserted here by the headteacher at School Three. The headteacher at School Two equated the purposefulness of experiencing student voice activity to falling off a bike whilst learning to ride – that the purpose should be the lived-experience; and by being structured and scaffolded in the correct way could lead to great gains for the students involved:

Sometimes it's the experience which is the important bit. Learning from failure in a safe way; in a scaffold, a structure that allows you to reflect and learn so you develop new strategies for success. Failing off your bike as you learn to ride springs to mind. (School Two: 80)

The headteacher at School Five described the process of becoming part of the school buddying system where students who had received training would go to be part of this playground buddying system. Part of the training involved establishing the purpose of this activity covering the tenet and intent of the activity; it also outlined a process or a journey that the students would go through. At the end of this journey trained students would be phased into the playground buddying scheme which complemented the ongoing student voice activity of improving the playground experience for students. The headteacher illustrated this saying:

They actually went through training of what the purpose actually is, what they could do about it, what their role was so they knew they would go through a process where they would get the skills to be a 'playground friend' and only when that was complete would they be phased into the playground. (School Five: 43)

Fielding and Bragg (2003) assert that through the lived-experience of student voice activity new skills, social competencies, new relationships, and a chance to be active and creative can happen reflecting the journey of students at School Five. Fielding and Bragg (2003) define such journeys as 'transformative experiences'. The headteacher at School One described how the school council had come up with a proposal to build a swimming pool in the roof of the school which students took forwards. What is clear here is that the headteacher knew there would be no outcome from this activity but the experience would offer the opportunity for students to develop skills and to learn from the activity:

They worked with the architects from the planning department, they did research, they submitted their designs, they learned about health and safety. They did lots of things, they had to keep refining their designs and negotiating with the architects. In the end it would've been so small you'd be lucky to get four children in it! That was a let down for them, but they got to develop a lot of skills and to constructively manage failure in a supportive way and learn from it. So that had no benefits for the school, but was extremely beneficial for them; they got to experience loads of things and they really enjoyed it.
(School One: 36)

The headteacher at School Two outlined how students were involved in student questionnaires, describing them as very beneficial for students and the school – In particular they highlighted the Pupil Attitudes to Self and School survey (Williams, Whittome & Watts, 2005) and how the PASS survey was used to identify students who were disengaging. The headteacher illustrated that for these students being part of something, or the lived experience, was more important than changing things:

We use the PASS survey to help identify our 'voiceless learners', you know the ambers, the ones who the survey is telling us are becoming disengaged or dissatisfied. As a senior leadership team we target those pupils, we get them involved in different activities. We interview each one and tell them what their survey said and ask them to think about how I can change the school to make it better for them. But you know what they're telling me isn't about change, it's about belonging – what we can do with these pupils so they feel they belong. Experiencing or being part of decision making process makes a difference to them. (School Two: 69)

Student voice activity here is opening up avenues to inclusion. Flutter and Rudduck (2004) argue that those who are risk of disengagement can benefit greatly from increased consultation and where student voice activity allows greater expression of student voice from these groups, an increase in academic performance may also be witnessed. This view is further complemented by the work of Rudduck and McIntyre (2007). Here the headteacher certainly echoed a view in line with a greater

expression of student voice benefiting those students, but in particular the benefit being in developing a sense of belonging. Here the purpose or the function of student voice activity was about the experience for these pupils and gains for them. Mitra (2003) supplements these claims arguing that student involvement in purposeful decision making in partnerships with adults may create meaningful learning experiences particularly for those students who would otherwise disengage, or find little meaning in their school experience. It is the creation of these meaningful learning experiences that make experiential purpose so powerful; a view augmented by Earl and Lee (1999) who argue that students who had previously disengaged or become hard to reach became some of the most fervent proponents in the school reform process once involved in purposeful activity. The headteacher at School Four described how students conducted their own research into the playground and that the value lay in the experience of the activity – the conducting of the research itself – but that the school also gained as a result, even though this was not something planned at the start:

Some areas were used more than other areas. Some areas were areas where the children used for chatting and some areas were for running and playing. Some areas were what they call the danger areas. Some areas were dangerous in terms of flashpoints and accidents, some areas were unsafe, so that was very useful. It was purposeful for the children as far as being able to share these concerns with me and being able to properly partake in active research. And gains for us because I didn't even think about parts of the playground being perceived as a bit unsafe or that there were unsafe areas.
(School Four: 45)

They also described some of the functions of the school council highlighting how it could raise issues which were purposeful for them and discuss and prioritise them with the headteacher. This is another example of student involvement in purposeful decision making in partnerships with adults – supporting Mitra's (2004) claim. The headteacher at School Four stated that the school council had:

The opportunity of meeting with me and raising their concerns. We discuss issues and then we identify and prioritise in that way. So that's always a good experience. (School Four: 7)

When discussing what students gained from being part of the school council the headteacher at School Four outlined a range of new experiences including learning its rules as well as learning and experiencing new roles, coupled with some capabilities around individual students representing the views of a group:

Well what things do the councillors experience; first would probably be learning what a democratic process is. Because there are certain rules that you have to abide by while you are in a school council. What it is. What does a Chair do? So, understanding the roles and responsibilities if you are in a position within the School Council. Rather than just being a School Councillor. And then understanding what it means to be a School Councillor, so it's not just about your opinion, or your viewpoint but actually you are representing your class. So it's purposeful for all those who get to be councillors. (School Four: 1)

In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to the role of 'purpose' in terms of the experiences of student voice activity. In these descriptions there were clear examples and illustrations from headteachers of student voice activity creating experiential journeys for students that were beneficial for students, the organisation, or both.

Purpose: Outcomes

The outcome of student voice activity, the product of a student voice activity was a theme that emerged. The headteacher at School Three talked about a number of awards from external bodies including 'Healthy Schools Status', awarded by the National Healthy Schools Programme (DfES & NHSS, 2004), and the 'Active Mark', awarded by Sport England (DfES & DCMS, 2004) – both awards require students to

conduct research and to demonstrate their active participation. The headteacher claimed that external awards were important for the school and everybody benefited from them. The purpose for involving students in these student voice activities was to achieve those awards, to gain an outcome:

We really value awards for the school – it's not just your claim, it's external. It says something about you as a school. That's why I really pushed things like healthy schools. We did that with the 'Healthy Schools Status' as well, so there were times that the children knew they were doing things for it and they were doing research. Then we invited someone in to present the plaque and talk to the children about all their hard work and what had happened. And similarly we've gained the 'Active Mark' very recently because of all the stuff the children have been doing with keeping fit and healthy and that sort of thing. Everybody benefits. We're sharing it with the children, 'look how great we are!' (School Three: 35)

There were also examples where student voice activity was driven by students, whose purpose was to gain an outcome – an improvement in the quality of school dinners. In describing how the outcome of this student voice activity was purposeful for the students, the headteacher at School Five stated:

Like all the work they did with school meals it's got to have a purpose, like something has to happen because of it. And it did, we changed the school meal contract and things improved so the children got the outcome they wanted. That was a nice example because they designed it because it mattered to them. (School Five: 31)

This theme of students driving student voice activity to achieve outcomes that were important to them, particularly in regards to improvements in school meals was a recurring theme, however the headteacher at School Four summed up how both the students and the institution benefited in this area. They talked about the role of the school council in raising this issue of school meals and students fighting for and

presenting their case. The headteacher facilitated their decisions so that the outcome was purposeful for them, demonstrating that it is not impossible to bridge this gap:

The first thing that we tackled was the kitchen. It's something they raised - it's always been on the school agenda, and school dinners have improved. I would say that pupil voice was very strong and it was helped by what was happening nationally. That there was an outcome. But I would not go as far as to say that the outcome wouldn't have been successful had there not been that national debate as well because I think that the children really fought their case pretty well and we were able to present that to me and the Local Authority. I could see where they were coming from and find ways by which we could facilitate their decisions. Now that was one good outcome for all. (School Four: 16)

There were also examples of institutionally driven student voice activity whose purpose was to have an outcome for the school. The headteacher at School One described the chaos of the behaviour management system when they joined the school and set about changing this by introducing four school rules. All students were involved in this process:

Each class put together a set of rules for the school that they felt were important. They voted on their top three and we collected all those rankings. I pulled it all together and presented it in an assembly. We now follow four rules instead of ten. It's much easier for everyone to understand, it was democratic, I got the outcome I wanted, it helps supply teachers, it helps everybody. (School One: 9)

This distinction between improvements for the institution and improvements for the student is a challenging one – a type of ‘chicken and egg’ scenario plays out in some of the literature: do we improve the institution in order to improve the students, or do we improve the students in order to improve the institution? For example Fielding and Bragg (2003) in their work on students as researchers articulate a position whereby student voice activity can be the creator of knowledge for the institution so

improving the students can lead to improving the institution. Flutter and Rudduck (2004) in their work on consulting pupils articulate a position whereby teaching and learning are improved through student voice activity so improving the institutional approach can improve things for the students. The headteacher at School Three described how students were involved in interviews whose purpose was to gain an output – to improve teaching and learning or to improve the support and intervention programme they were receiving. They were used as a source of information to rate the additional services they were receiving and to help the school identify ways of improving that provision, very much reflecting the position of Flutter and Rudduck (2004) that encouraging schools to adopt student voice practices can improve what the school has to offer. The purpose in terms of the output of students being consulted in this way was instrumentally orientated:

One of the things that we started at the beginning of last year was monitoring the impact of intervention programmes. So we set about interviewing children that we're on an intervention programme as to how effective they felt that programme was. Were they learning? Was the person that they were being taught by helping them? Did they like that person? Some quite delicate questions and these were fed back to that individual. (School Three: 42)

The headteacher at School Three summed up this student voice activity in terms of its purpose or its output as the improvement of teaching and learning or the improvement of support and intervention programmes and stated:

They're going to get an improved quality of teaching or support. That's the fundamental reason why we're doing it, so that the children get the best that they can possibly get. (School Three: 45)

The headteacher at School Two illustrated the complexities of small overlapping or interrelated student voice activity being part of a greater purposeful student voice activity; that of building a new school as part of the Building Schools for the Future (DfES, 2004b) Programme:

Having pupils conduct research on behalf of the school was extremely beneficial. There are probably over one hundred examples of small bits of research, mini projects, surveys, questionnaires, competitions, the list is massive! There were lots of mini targets but the overall objective of all this work was to give the pupils a real stake in the design and build of the new school. They own this school, this building. (School Two: 44)

Student voice activity is complicated further by the fact that it can have different purposes for different people, depending upon the perspective taken. This was demonstrated clearly by the headteacher at School Four when citing how the school gained a purposeful outcome; the students did not, but gained from the experience:

The children wanted to design a new playground. They did some surveys and research and then some children worked as clients, presenting a brief to university students who then helped them design a kind of 3D computer model. They presented it to governors who considered it, but it was too costly. So that was a useful outcome for the school and the children would probably say it was a bad outcome. (School Four: 18)

Rowe (2003) concludes that student voice activity can improve every aspect of school life. In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to the role of ‘purpose’ in terms of the outcomes of student voice activity. In these descriptions there were clear examples and illustrations from headteachers of student voice activity creating outputs that were beneficial for students, the organisation, or both.

Summarising Purpose

From across the five schools there were 121 quotes and explanations describing the role of purpose. The duality of students improving things for themselves, leading to school improvement (Fielding & Bragg, 2003) and schools improving things for schools, leading to enhancements for students (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004) was a common theme. In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers

alluded to a number of areas which can be grouped under the heading of 'purpose'. They included: 27 quotes and explanations describing the tenet of student voice activity; 23 quotes and explanations describing the intentions of student voice activity; 24 quotes and explanations describing the experiences of student voice activity; and, 47 quotes and explanations describing the outcomes of student voice activity. Values were espoused demonstrating that the principle purpose of student voice activity was to serve students, and schools benefited in addition to this. Headteachers were comfortable when student voice activity principally served both the school and its students. Where student voice activity was state driven and focused on school improvement, headteachers found ways of articulating the tenet of student voice activity so that it could serve both the school and the students. Positive change was the key intention of student voice activity, making it purposeful. There were many examples where student voice activity brought about positive change; there were also examples of where it did not but headteachers were comfortable with this as long as the intent was to try and change things for the better. Where this was student led, headteachers claimed that the intent was always to improve things for students and therefore worthwhile. The building of a swimming pool in the roof space of a school was one of many examples cited showing how the lived experience of an activity had incredible benefits for the students even though the intended outcome did not transpire. Many examples were also given demonstrating positive change and successful outcomes ranging from building a new school and improving facilities such as toilets, right through to improvements in learning and teaching. Purpose, as defined here with its four aspects, has a role in the implicit framework headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity.

Defining Participation

The word participation can mean many things and can be interpreted differently, in this analysis it relates to a number of elements. They include: who is able to access a student voice activity; the barriers to access; support mechanisms for access and space provided for it; who is allowed to choose whether to partake in or disassociate from an activity; and the equitableness of student voice in a student voice activity and how it is heard.

Participation: Accessibility

The accessibility of student voice activity was a theme that emerged. Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) claim the words participation and involvement; with respect to student voice activity can mean different things to different people. For some they claim the two terms are synonymous. For others there are a plethora of views as to how involved students can actually or expect to be with regard to any student voice activity. The views of the headteacher at School Three were commensurate with the latter category, substantiating this with an argument regarding their perceived correlation between student capabilities and the level of access to student voice activity. In describing how different students across the school were involved in the Healthy Schools Status award (DfES & NHSS, 2004), the headteacher at School Three argued that because of students differing ability levels and age-related capabilities, the accessibility of a student voice activity had to correlate to the current capabilities of each student:

It's impossible to say that every child can access every activity because of the nature of children. A year one child will struggle to access what a year six child can and if it's the other way round then it's probably set at too low a level for the year six child. So you either differentiate the activity so it's accessible to the level of each child or you provide different activities for different levels. Key stage two children and some from key stage one could conduct the Healthy School's survey so that only required assistance from some staff to help some children. Children in the nursery and reception classes wouldn't be able to carry out a big survey like that because some of the concepts around healthy food aren't there yet, but they kept logs of what they ate in their class and told us what food they liked and why. (School Three: 25)

The theme of accessibility and in particular supporting access so that students could participate was apparent in other cases. For example, in describing the workings of the school council the headteacher at School One explained that the deputy headteacher was used to facilitate the meetings. The purpose of this was to ensure

that every student could access student voice activity and take part in a way that made them feel involved:

My deputy facilitates the meetings but all that's about is equal access, making sure every child can take part in the meetings and feel like they're involved.
(School One: 5)

Shier (2001) claims that many schools are not ready for a school council, having not fully explored why they want a school council and whether their school, in particular, whether adults are ready to embrace new values regarding student voice. To that end school councils do not have the status they require to be transformational nor are they equitable as barriers to access exist for many students. Here the headteacher at School One has clearly given consideration to barriers to access and resources to alleviate them. Whitty and Wisby (2007) in their research considered how barriers in setting up and maintaining school councils could be overcome. In particular they reference the readiness of staff to support their school council and identify this as a weak area which creates barriers. However in this study there were several examples of other adults in schools supporting school councils. For example, the headteacher at School Two highlighted the idea of accessibility with regard to student voice activity when describing how pastoral staff were used to help some students:

We have pupils with additional and challenging needs like every school and we try to use all means to support them in accessing the curriculum or wider aspects of school life. The pupil parliament at present has a couple of members who require the support of their pastoral lead to help them access some of the activities. (School Two: 28)

In identifying students with additional and challenging needs this headteacher touched upon the need for additional structures or resources to support students in accessing student voice activity. It could be argued that recognition and redress of this fact could lead to greater accessibility or widening participation in student voice activity for those students. Smyth (2006) is very clear in this regard in that the structures and practices of schools must take account of the barriers and power

divisions that persist if any move to widen participation is to be effective. Once these complex power and relational dynamics are understood, Mitra (2006) argues, only then can true focus be given to finding the correct solutions to increase access for all students in student voice activity. The fact that this headteacher appears to recognised this, and has created solutions by providing pastoral support leads as a resource; indicate that headteachers draw upon participation, in terms of accessibility of student voice activity. In discussing how students from most year groups were involved in the school council the headteacher at School Five stated that the assistant headteacher was deployed in a similar role on the school council to facilitate participation, in particular ensuring younger students were able to participate in student voice activity at a level suitable to them:

For years two and three it can be difficult so the assistant headteacher facilitates meetings and ensures they can participate at a level suitable to them. (School Five: 7)

The headteacher at School Four described the peer mentoring programme with regard to student transition from key stage one to key stage two whereby older mentors worked with younger students to induct them into the school. The headteacher clarified how the institution did everything it could to support student mentors to be successful including clarifying their role; illustrating that some students could access a student voice activity unaided and some required support to access the same student voice activity:

Some children really take on that responsibility of you know inducting a little one and they really take them under their wing and others you know are you know a bit off-hand. So it's a question of maybe making it clear to that child what their role is, and doing what we can to support them to be successful. If they are you know successful then the inducting of a little one will be. That's why I say peer mentoring done properly is very beneficial. (School Four: 51)

Here we touch upon students as resources, involved in student voice activity to overcome barriers to access for other students. Stoltz (2005) argues that such programmes can help new students adapt to their new institution faster and claims the mentor-mentee relational bond can result in the mentee developing a sense of connectedness or belonging. The headteacher at School Four clearly linked improved accessibility in this student voice activity to success. The headteacher at School One also touched upon barriers to access and need to take action to resolve it:

If there are barriers to a child taking part then we need to do something about it. (School One: 10)

In describing how students were involved in improving teaching and learning up to a point, the headteacher at School Four explained that a lack of developed structures prevented them from giving students access to improving all aspect of teaching and learning:

There is only so far you can go with involving children in improving the teaching aspect. Learning fine, but teaching that's the bit that comes from teachers, and they are people. There are some bits where I put barriers up, because teachers need self-esteem and confidence too. What I mean is we don't quite have the structures yet to do you know, do I like my teacher, does their classroom style sadden me. That's sometime the staff and the students have to develop together. That's something for the future. (School Four: 55)

Here is an example of adults creating barriers to participation. Shier (2001) highlights an adult lack of readiness to explore the higher echelons of the transformative nature of student voice activity. In expanding upon students' involvement in improving teaching and learning the headteacher at School Three outlined the process by which they received additionality. Here these students who received support or intervention programmes were interviewed. They claimed that the purpose of a student voice activity dictated which students should be allowed to participate in it:

It all depends on the purpose really. Here we are just looking to improve our intervention programmes so it's pointless to allow other children to be involved in these interviews. The ones who participate are the ones who can tell us something. (School Three: 43)

In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to the role of 'participation' in terms of accessibility of student voice activity; who is able to access a student voice activity, the barriers to access, support mechanisms for access and space provided for it. In these descriptions there were clear examples and illustrations from headteachers of the differing levels of accessibility and justifications for these.

Participation: Choice

Who is allowed to choose whether to be involved in or engage in student voice activity or disengage or disassociate from a student voice activity was a theme that emerged. Frost (2008) claims there is now a general acceptance that students will participate in decision making in schools – mirrored by the comments of this headteacher, who expands upon this claiming some students want to participate in student voice activity and some do, arguing for the importance of students being able to make that choice for themselves:

It's very important that children participate in decision making and that they see the benefits in it but it's also important that they have choices because some children want to be involved and some do not. (School Four: 10)

Pastor (2002) believes it's of paramount importance that students should be allowed to understand and exercise their choices and voices. The headteacher at School Four echoed this belief. This theme of choice and the ability to engage with or disengage from a particular student voice activity was also frequent at School Five. In describing their buddying system the headteacher identified behavioural issues in the playground and the setting up of 'Playground Friends' and outlined the process of how students were involved in this system. Students were given a choice whether or

not they wanted to become a Playground Friend. Those who put themselves forwards went through a selection process:

We had issues with pupils' behaviour in the playground along with lots of children saying they found playtime difficult for a variety of reasons. Through work with the Education Action Zone we set up a buddying system called Playground Friends. The children again put themselves forward; they did application forms and were interviewed. (School Five: 41)

The headteacher at School Three explained how the different aspects of their buddying system in the school worked and described in detail how a new student (who arrived after the commencement of an academic year) would be matched to other students in the class. The purpose of this was to ensure a smooth transition into the school. The adults would do the preparatory work and then invite one of the current students from the selected group in the class to buddy or mentor the new student. They were given the opportunity to choose whether they wanted to be involved, and depending upon the nature of the mentoring their parents might also be consulted:

The first type of buddying is when we get a new pupil into a class and they're paired up with two or three children who they play with, and who show them around to make them feel comfortable. Sometimes we use it as a strategy to support children with special needs, behavioural needs or self-esteem needs, so that it's actually planned into an IEP, an individual education plan, that this person will have a buddy and that it's monitored on a regular basis. You have to ask the child if they want to be involved and depending on what you want them to do you have to ask the parent as well. You will identify the right type of person or character to do this and then you will invite them to be a buddy. (School Three: 38)

This idea of students having a choice or personal autonomy in this situation aligns with that of Rudduck and Fielding (2006) who highlight the significance of the

development of individual identity, personal autonomy and choice in developing schools as communities where dialogue flourishes. One school had identified specific groups of students who could provide a source of information. Students weren't given the choice to be in this identified group but were allowed to choose if they wanted to withdraw from a specific student voice activity. One particular case which highlights this came from School Five – when elaborating on the processes for students involvement in improving teaching and learning the headteacher explained firstly how adults selected students from a range of abilities across the school to be involved in surveys to help improve teaching and learning; but these students who had not put themselves forwards in the first instance had the right to refuse to be involved or to disengage from this student voice activity. When that happened their place was offered to another student:

We survey the children once a half term. The senior management team choose six children from each class of varying ability levels and there's a whole set of questions with one of them around things that stop them from learning and the other thing is around what helps their learning and what things do they learn about, or what sort of teaching helps them to learn more. Some don't want to be involved so we offer their place to someone else.
(School Five: 49)

Drawing on Lodge and Read's (2003) model this type of student voice activity would be classified as one where students were seen as sources of information. They claim for this type of activity that schools neither encourage nor discourage active involvement. It is left for students to assert and make themselves heard. They argue that, invariably the disengaged, disaffected and unmotivated gain very little from this type of activity or find it difficult to access or become involved (Lodge & Read, 2003). The headteacher here does not distinguish any limitations of this approach. In other cases students weren't given a choice whether to participate or not in a student voice activity and their participation was forced. The headteacher at School One justified this claiming it was in the students' best interests to participate in a student voice activity and in doing so they would learn that their best interests were

being served. In describing the way students were involved in the Assessment for Learning (DCSF, 2008b) programme they claimed that:

Assessment for Learning is such a crucial tool for helping children learn to become independent learners, but they only learn that through doing it. So yes we do have some who don't want to take part but we don't give them a choice. (School One: 20)

There were also examples where participation in a student voice activity was forced; whereby students did not have a choice and had to take part. However one of the dangers of this was highlighted by the headteacher at School Two where all students were forced to take part in the PASS survey (Williams, Whittome & Watts, 2005). The results of this multiple choice based survey indicated that students utilised strategies to discredit the value of this activity. This headteacher explained that:

One of the things we learned from the PASS survey was we had 'conscientious objectors'. We made every pupil do it; we provided support with learning mentors and teaching assistants for those who needed it. Some pupils chose to answer 'A' for every question or 'D' from every question. I asked pastoral leads to investigate this and what came back was some pupils did not want to do it so basically they spoiled their survey. (School Two: 65)

Foucault (1991) asserts where there is power there will be resistance, opposition and counter-compliance. Enforcing participation here caused counter-compliance and highlights an important aspect with regards to the management of student voice activity. It may now be being seen as a tool by which school improvement can be brought about as well as improving outcomes for students (Fielding, 2002; Mitra, 2003; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000) however, care must be taken with the results of student voice activity and the methods selected to glean those results. The headteacher in this example demonstrated how not offering students a choice had led to disinformation being produced – a dangerous bedrock to build any improvement or enhancement upon. Biermann (2006) when discussing positive aspects of students

participating in decision making highlighted the importance students attached to having a choice, equating it with the right to have a say. In discussing the school council and more generally students' involvement in decision making the headteacher at School One claimed that participation was about the personal choice of the student and argued that it was okay for students to choose not to be involved in student voice activity as long as they were happy with their decision or reasons:

I suppose it comes down to personal choice doesn't it. If a child doesn't want to take part then maybe it's okay to say okay you don't have to. It's the reason they're not taking part that interests me and are they happy with it.
(School One: 57)

Here we touch upon students' ability to disassociate from student voice activity. What is interesting is the reason for disassociation. What can not be understood in this example is whether those who chose not to participate actually supported the specific student voice activity they were disassociating from. This resonates strongly with the claims of Whitty and Wisby (2007) that differing student voice apparatus need to have the support of students from across a school, although their work focused specifically on school councils. In their study they found that several school councils were by default exclusive bodies which barred access for many students, leaving them feeling disempowered and unhappy. The sentiments of the headteacher at School One, with regard to student happiness at disassociation parallel with these claims. The headteacher at School Three mirrored these claims in confirming that students do have the ability to choose and therefore a broad range of avenues need to be opened up so that they can choose to have their voices heard through the channel they are most conformable with:

We know that children have different preferences and they will choose the avenue that best suits them but if that doesn't exist they may choose to say nothing at all. So our challenge is to keep opening up those avenues. (School Three: 59)

Hart's (1997) ladder illustrates steps on a continuum of the extent that students can participate in student voice activity, from no choice right through to students being able to dictate their own level of participation. In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to the role of 'participation' in terms of choice; where the ability to partake or disassociate lay. In these descriptions there were clear examples and illustrations from headteachers of where the choice to partake in or disassociate from student voice activity lay with students, the school, and both.

Participation: Voice-equity

How the voice of students is allowed to be listened to or heard, with regard to student voice activity was a theme that emerged. The headteacher at School Three described how the school employed a number of channels to hear the voices of students and claimed that they captured what students had to say:

Through pupil feedback folders, through the school's council, through circle time, through a number of means we've got the children's voice. We make sure we have as many channels as possible so that we hear them in as many ways as we can. (School Three: 24)

Reay (2006) defines the 'cacophony of competing voices' in schools in two ways: firstly, the issue of collections or groups of students competing to be heard as individuals amongst a backdrop of many voices; and secondly, individual students having 'multiple-selves' depending upon the environment they are in – the 'self' they are in one class may not be the same as the 'self' they are in another class, or the 'self' they are outside of school. It could be suggested that the headteacher at School Three implicitly understood this, employing a number of channels and a range of means to capture student voices to hear them in as many ways as possible. They included individual pupil feedback folders to hear the voice of individuals, school council as the representative body of each class to hear the voice of each class, and circle time (Sharp, Reed & Lipman, 1992), which doubled as a vehicle to hear the voice of individuals and groups. Arnot and Reay (2006) distinguish between

different ‘voices’ allied to their different ‘self’ in different situations for students. They include pedagogic and social voice. Here is an important point – distinguishing between hearing the voice of an individual student and hearing the collective voice of a group of students with regard to student voice activity, and whether that voice is located in the pedagogic, social, community or other contexts. The headteacher at School Five claimed that the school council was one of the main ways they got to hear the voice of students:

School council runs through everything we do in terms of involving children in decision making or making changes for the better. It’s one of the main ways we hear what they have to say. (School Five: 9)

In describing the Assessment for Learning (DCSF, 2008b) programme the headteacher at School Three claimed they captured the voice of individual students and did so by providing time for them to respond to individual comments in their book on what helped their learning; teachers also interviewed students to supplement this process. The idea of providing space and time for students to communicate or respond – in this instance responding to individual comments in books – aligns with one of the nine requirements identified by Fielding (2001) needed for the practice of dialogic democracy in a school. The headteacher believed these mechanisms enabled them to hear the voices of students with a view to the school doing everything in its power to helping them achieve – by implication illustrating that they both captured and responded to student voice:

What we do is get the children to do a lot of self assessment themselves, from as sensible as looking at comments in their books and being given the time to respond to the comments in their books, to having interviews with the teacher for example on how well they’ve felt things have helped their learning. We try and capture what they have to say, to make sure we’re doing all we can to help them achieve. (School Three: 20)

The headteacher at School Four touched upon the theme of hearing the voice of all students whilst discussing their school council, recognising the need to involve all:

But if you don't involve them all you don't hear everybody's voice. (School Four: 12)

This recognition of the need to hear all voices and the need for students to be able to participate aligns with the view of Robinson and Taylor (2007) with regard to the consequences of a lack of equity in student voice activity. They argue that the more articulate, able pupils are the ones who reap the benefits from specific student voice activity. Hearing the voice of each individual and the voice of the collective was further complicated by the headteacher at School Four who highlighted the problems inherent in individuals trying to effectively represent the voice of a group. In describing involvement in school council the headteacher was clear that some students particularly younger students had difficulty in separating out the difference between giving their own opinion to the school council and accurately articulating and communicating the collective view of their class: The headteacher stated that:

They are not just giving their opinion but representing their constituency and representing the views of those in your class so that's a big thing. For some younger children it is quite difficult for them to understand that. (School Four: 3)

There are implications here regarding whose voice is actually being heard and whether what is being heard is accurate and authentic; in effect a challenge to the equitableness of student voice. If Reay (2006) and Robinson and Taylor (2007) are correct in their assertions – that articulate pupils find their way to having their voices heard via different avenues – it is incumbent then that other, less articulate students are given comparable opportunities to participate if equitableness of student voice activity is to be realised. There was evidence that headteachers did indeed draw on participation, in terms of the fairness of student voice activity, and utilised strategies and training programmes to improve the way in which students voices could be heard. In one particular example, in discussing how students were involved in training programmes the headteacher at School One described the 'Philosophy for Children' (Sharp, Reed & Lipman, 1992) programme (P4C) and claimed that

involvement in it had helped students to express themselves more clearly as individuals. The main vehicle to capture this individual and collective voice was circle time:

We train them in 'Philosophy for Children' once a week linked to circle time. I think it has been very beneficial for the children because they get to think more deeply about things and express themselves, not just go along with the opinions of others. We try and make circle time about hearing what each child has to say about the school. (School One: 15)

Flutter and Rudduck (2004) argue that introducing practices that encourage greater expression of student voice can assist the academic performance of certain groups of students, particularly those who are at risk of disengagement, a view complemented by Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) who claim this group inherently benefits from greater consultation. MacBeath (2006) supports and supplements this claim, arguing that it is those who are not doing so well who benefit most from student voice activity, when their voice is heard. What follows from this line of argument is that one must provide a diverse range of activities in order to capture the voices of every individual student. Headteachers demonstrated an understanding of this in terms of participation, with regard to the equity of student voice. For example, the idea of doing everything possible to capture individual student voices and collective voice was highlighted by the headteacher at School Two along with recognition of the power of silence. Whilst explaining the multitude of ways of capturing 'voice' the headteacher at School Two argued that:

You have to accept that not everyone wants to have a say about everything. As long as it's the pupil who decides that though. The key challenge is to work out whether their silence is a protest; whether it's about apathy; whether it's about satisfaction; sometimes silence means you're getting it right; sometimes silence is just silence. (School Two: 72)

This is a salient point and raises the issue of students who do not wish to have their voices heard. It brings into focus the power that students have to withhold and

control what they bring to any student voice activity. Arnot et al (2003) recognise this key challenge that there can be just as much equity in the silence of an individual student, as there can be to one who wishes to have their voice heard. It is this challenge, they argue, that needs to be analysed in the context and situation in which it has arisen for adults to establish the real meaning of it. The headteacher at School Two reflected this position, highlighting this key challenge. In explaining the issues that students raised with regard to the poor quality of school meals the headteacher at School Five highlighted how they could hear the voice of the students. However because they couldn't change things they stopped listening! They explained that:

Staff felt they couldn't change things and I suppose in the end the children complained so often that we just got used to it. (School Five: 34)

In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to the role of 'participation' in terms of the equity in hearing students voice during student voice activity; how individual, group and competing voices were heard and the role of silence. In these descriptions there were clear examples and illustrations of verbal-equity in student voice activity at the individual level, group and school levels.

Summarising Participation

From across the five schools there were 62 quotes and explanations describing the role of participation. Channels, structures and pathways to dialogue were highlighted as key requirements for participation, reflecting Pastor's (2002) assertions its challenging nature. In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to a number of areas which can be grouped under the heading of 'participation'. They included: 16 quotes and explanations describing the accessibility of student voice activity, barriers to access, support mechanisms for access and space provided for it; 20 quotes and explanations describing the choice to partake in or disassociate from student voice activity; and, 26 quotes and explanations describing the equitableness of student voice activity, achievable at the individual level, the group level, or school level. Headteachers discussed their awareness of the capabilities of students, barriers to access and how they could supplement those

capabilities by providing additional resources – examples cited often talked about younger children being able to access the workings of a school council with help from other adults. The mentor-mentee relationship and buddying arrangements showed headteachers thought about and provided resources to aid accessibility but in many cases so did students.

Playground friends and buddying systems were cited as activities whereby students had the right to choose whether to take part or distance themselves from an activity. The removal of choice by headteachers and the subsequent sabotaging of an activity by students highlight a key dilemma for all headteachers – how to ensure student voice activity does not become negative. In order for schools to hear the voices of all students a variety of channels and activities had to be provided. As well as acknowledging the most able participating, and structures and channels for the disenfranchised, headteachers also acknowledged the challenge of silence – students who chose not to have their voices heard. Participation was a particularly challenging area. Participation, as defined here with its three aspects, has a role in the implicit framework headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity.

Defining Potential

The word potential can mean many things and can be interpreted differently, in this analysis it relates to a number of elements. They include: the possibility for developing and increasing a sense of agency or efficacy through student voice activity – specifically students being able to act or exert influence and power in a given situation and bring about change or the belief that they can; they include the possibility for developing and increasing a sense of belonging or connectedness through student voice activity – specifically students developing more meaningful relationships with others, attachments to their community and being listened to, and; they include the possibility for developing and increasing and acquiring competences and skills through student voice activity – specifically students experiencing alternative learning opportunities, developing skills and applying them to real life situations.

Potential: Agency

Carver's (1997) correlations of agency, belonging and competences resonate strongly with gains from student voice activity in this study, although it must be pointed out that this study included secondary and primary schools, was much shorter in length and utilised a different methodology. The potential for developing and increasing a sense of agency through student voice activity was a theme that emerged. In outlining what students had gained from being involved in the 'Building School for the Future' programme (DfES, 2004b) which resulted in a brand new school being built the headteacher at School Two argued that students now knew they had some authority over, and could influence decision making at the school. This mirrors part of the description of agency as defined by Carver (1997) in that agency is about acting or exerting influence and power in a given situation. The headteacher stated:

One of the main things pupils have gained is the knowledge that they can have authority and influence over decision making in this school. (School Two: 47)

Carver (1997) defines the application of agency as students becoming effective change agents, particularly in areas that matter to them or gave value for them, gaining more control over their lives and the co-creation of a sense of empowerment between students and community (Carver, 1997). The theme of what actually matters to students and those students being able to have a say in those matters arose on a number of occasions. For example, in discussing how students were involved in improving teaching and learning the headteacher from School Five described the student voice activity whereby students were asked about the things they felt stopped them learning. The headteacher claimed that students had the opportunity to have their voices heard and their voice was the catalyst for bringing about positive change:

Well the staff really don't like it! They find it very uncomfortable so although I learn a lot about the teaching styles and organisational capabilities of my staff, they find it quite distressing especially if children are saying negative things about their teaching. What do the children gain; they have the opportunity to have their voices heard regarding the teaching they receive and as an outcome things change for the better so they see it as a worthwhile process. (School Five: 52)

This links directly with Johnston and Nicholls' (1995) claim that allowing students to articulate how they learn best can improve a teacher's ability to meet their students' needs. The use of student voice activity as a catalyst for positive change in schools is highlighted in the work of Oldfather (1995), Rudduck and Flutter (2000), Fielding (2001), and Mitra (2003) who claim it has helped improve teaching, enhance the curriculum and lead to improvements in teacher-student relationships. The headteacher here used student voice activity as the catalyst for improvements in teaching and learning. Another example of students exerting influence in a given situation was given by the headteacher at School Five when explaining the process by which the school council and the catering company, who provide school meals, worked together. Here students took their complaints to the catering company along with suggestions for improvements. The headteacher explained how these suggestions were put into an action plan and monitored, and claimed it was the students who championed change:

Myself and some of the school council meet the catering company every half term. The children present complaints and suggestions for improvements and they do something about them. We have an action plan and a system for monitoring complaints. The children have really demanded change, and got it. (School Five: 38)

This is a clear example of efficacy - students had authority over decision making, they exerted influence and they held power in this given situation. Headteachers also thought about developing students' positive sense of agency – the feeling or belief that one could have authority over decision making which could affect change and the

feeling that one could influence or hold power in a given situation. For example, when describing the work of the school council at School One the headteacher was very clear that every student should feel they are able to affect change on issues that are important to them. The headteacher claimed:

I want every child in this school to feel they have can have a say in things that matter to them. (School One: 13)

In describing circle time the headteacher at School Three claimed that students had the ability to change things that mattered to them and knew they could be agents of change. The headteacher illustrated how students had a sense of agency:

If there's something that really matters to a child, something they really want to change or feel they can improve then they know they can do it. They know they can have a say. They know they have a variety of vehicles in this school. I don't know what you would call that. Is it empowerment? Is it knowing you can be an agent of change? Maybe if we ask one of the children they can tell us in their own words. (School Three: 55)

In the transcripts from all five schools the word empower appeared once: in the above example where the headteacher asked would something be called empowerment. In their work on adolescents exercising control over their own lives and historical and ideological structures that prevent this, Costello et al (2000) describe how being involved in decisions that effect them and influencing areas that matter to them can both develop agency and increase a sense of agency in young people. Students in this study ranged from ages 5-18; however comments by headteachers seem to indicate that much younger students who wouldn't fall into the category of 'young people' can still have both agency and an improving sense of agency via the same avenues. Through their experiences in designing a new school and seeing that come to fruition the headteacher at School Two highlighted how students had plenty of opportunity to

be involved in decision making on things that mattered to them and had affected real change, claiming:

The evidence of being able to affect real change is all around you; it's this very building you are sitting in. The pupils here have plenty of experience of having their say, changing things for the better, addressing areas that matter to them. (School Two: 48)

This is a very explicit example of a headteacher's awareness of the use of student voice activity and potential, in terms of developing agency, understanding the role of agency, and also understanding the role of student voice activity can play in increasing this sense of agency. In particular how the impact of being involved in decisions that bring about change or improvement can increase students' confidence that they may be able to change other things and be successful. This mirrors Haste's claim of the existence of a self-fulfilling cycle: participation in decision making increases confidence and in doing so makes students want to be more involved in other decisions (Haste, 2005); a view augmented by Hudson (2005) in that ongoing involvement in decision making increases students' sense of efficacy over time. This prophetic self-fulfilling cycle was highlighted by the headteacher at School Four:

The children themselves were given a range of options as to what they wanted to see in terms of improvements in your school. They brought up toilets as one of the issues that mattered to them and I told them that was fine, that I can deal with that, because I can make the toilets better. Once we made the toilets better they became much more vocal about other stuff they wanted to change. You see when they saw results that gave them confidence to ask me to improve other things. (School Four: 20)

Whitty and Wisby (2007) in their study into school councils claimed they were almost universally concerned with issues relating to school dinners and the toilets and had fallen well short of their potential to be truly transformative. In this example students raised an area which really mattered to them. Things changed as a result of

their involvement and through this they became more confident in asking for improvements in other areas. This link between an increase in a sense of agency and students wanting to be even more involved in decision making reflects what Lee and Zimmerman (2001) discovered through their study at the Manitoba School in Canada – a correlation between increases in students’ sense of agency and an increase in student voice activity. However it must be pointed out that their study took place over a greater period of time with many more examples of evidence being used to substantiate this link. The headteacher at School Three claimed that the school had developed a culture of improvement in which students had the knowledge that they could change and improve things:

We’ve developed a culture of change and improvement. The children know we’re always trying to improve things. If there are things they want to improve they know they can. (School Three: 56)

In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to the role of ‘potential’ in terms of the possibility for developing and increasing agency and a sense of agency through student voice activity. In these descriptions there were clear examples and illustrations from headteachers of students being able to act or exert influence and power in given situations, bringing about or affecting change, and having an increasing sense or belief in their own agency.

Potential: Belonging

The possibility for developing connections and increasing a sense of belonging through student voice activity was a theme that transpired. In describing circle time the headteacher at School Three explained how it was a vehicle whereby students could share their problems in a different way with other students and an adult. They claimed that this afforded students the possibility for closer relationships with their peers and adults, and gave students the sense that someone was listening to them:

It's another opportunity for the children to feel as though someone is listening to them. That they have a problem but it might not be a problem that they're experiencing on their own. That's the great thing about circle time; when they're hearing what people are saying it's 'oh that's happened to me as well' or 'I've heard of that' so it's a much more intimate way of exposing your own issues and sharing them with others and getting others help. It also helps the adults in the school to communicate with the children in that intimate way and helps them with group strategies to solve their issues. (School Three: 54)

This mirrors the description of belonging as defined by Carver (1997) which includes developing meaningful relationships with other students; developing meaningful relationships with adults; being listened to and having a role at the school (Carver, 1997). A sense of ownership or connectedness to your school can, according to Deuchar (2003) bring about positive changes to the ethos of a school. The idea of developing new or different meaningful relationships with others through student voice activity was a recurring theme. For example, in explaining how the school council conducted research into the poor quality of school meals and presented their findings, the headteacher at School Five stated:

I think they felt valued because they started something and got to present it to governors, so they had the ears of the governing body who actually listened to them and the school did something about it. For some it was the first time they ever got to work with governors, to have a relationship with them. (School Five: 26)

Carver (1997) defines the application of belonging or increased connectivity where students and adults develop different relationships and both connect with and care for each other (Carver, 1997). The development of a meaningful relationship between students and school governors, through this experience, was claimed by the headteacher to have value for the students involved. Yowell and Smylie (1999) in describing the relationship between students and teachers or adults in a school argue that learning is bidirectional – students learn from teachers and teachers can and do learn from students. In this example it was the adults who learnt something from the

students echoing the claim of Rudduck et al (1996) of students being “expert witnesses” – having useful things to tell about their experiences in a school, if the school will listen. In explaining the processes regarding the building of a new school and students’ involvement in it, the headteacher at School Two claimed that different types of relationships formed between students and adults:

The pupils worked with adults and senior leaders who I would say they did not previously have any meaningful contact with. That required us all to communicate differently and develop new ways of working together. (School Two: 45)

The development of more meaningful relationships with adults echoes McLaughlin’s (1993) claim that such experiences help foster a sense of belonging for students to their school. This view is complemented by Pittman and Wright (1991) who claim that a sense of belonging is fostered through helping students to forge closer relationships and different types of connections with adults in their institution. Connell, Gambone and Smith (1998) expand upon this further arguing such opportunities through student voice activity provide avenues for students to model adult roles and this in turn nurtures a connectedness to the organisation. Building a new school and being involved with other adults in different but meaningful ways highlights that this headteacher is aware of the role of potential, specifically developing a sense of belonging through student voice activity. Hannam (2001) cites a number of anecdotal claims of the causality between improved student-teacher relationships and enhancing attainment. Although this claim did not arise, it is interesting to note the number of occasions on which the improvement in student-teacher relationships was mentioned. This causality link could be an area for future investigation. The development of more meaningful relationships for students with other students was illustrated by the headteacher at School Four when discussing the role of older students in mentoring younger students. They stated:

It’s peer mentoring. The ‘year fives’ mentor the ‘year threes’ when they join the school. So they look after them. (School Four: 50)

This view is supplemented by Gold and Gold (1998) who claim that students who participate in student voice activity were now much more involved in caring for other students and more respectful of school resources and property; something which could be described as a sense of connectedness with and belonging to the school. In describing 'Playground Friends' – the buddying system used by the school at break times and lunchtimes, the headteacher at School Five claimed that students involved in this student voice activity got to develop relationships with other students they might not normally interact with, but also illustrated a developing sense of belonging for those students who required help during these periods:

So there are pictures of the playground friends in the exits and there's a friendship stop in the playground, they wear their bibs, they take it very, very seriously, and it does have an impact because I hear it from children. In recent surveys some of the children said they found the playground very, very difficult but they all mentioned playground friends had been there and that had helped them fit in during playtime. They get to develop relationships with children they would normally never play with. It has many benefits. (School Five: 44)

Atweh and Burton (1995) describe how student involvement in student voice activity can lead to a developing sense of belonging. The conditions for this require their contributions to be valued and respected and, in turn, they develop a sense of ownership and attachment to the organisation in which they are involved. This mirrors the claim made by the headteacher from School Five in describing how students from across the school were involved in the development of a new playground. They claimed that involvement in student voice activity fostered ownership:

Being involved fosters ownership so like the playground is well looked after because they put a lot of work and effort into designing it the way they wanted. It belongs to them now, they're connected to it. (School Five: 17)

This view is supplemented by Mitra (2003) that involvement in student voice activity can create new, more meaningful connections between students and the school, enhance channels of communication between students and adults, and help foster a feeling of belonging. In describing the benefits of the school council for the students the headteacher at School Three claimed:

It's a highly visible way that all the children in the school feel as though they are being listened to. It belongs to them. The school belongs to them and they belong to the school. (School Three: 6)

Using student voice activity to develop a feeling of being listened to and fostering a sense of belonging was a strong theme. Hannam (2001) cites a number of anecdotal claims of how student voice activity can raise student self-esteem, increase motivation and results in students feeling empowered. The headteacher at School One claimed they wanted all students to have a sense of belonging and used student voice activity to facilitate this:

I want every child in this school to feel that they belong here. Our buddying system was set up to ensure no child felt left out or excluded. The children set up the lonely stop in the playground and if you feel lonely you go there and other children will play with you. We had lots of issues with children feeling unhappy at playtime so our school council did some surveys and came up with that idea. (School One: 45)

In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to the role of 'potential' in terms of the possibility for developing and increasing a sense of belonging through student voice activity. In these descriptions there were clear examples and illustrations of this from headteachers of students developing more meaningful relationships with other students and adults, attachments to their school and a sense of being listened to.

Potential: Competences

The possibility for acquiring, developing and increasing competences and skills and engaging in alternative learning experiences through student voice activity was a theme that emanated. Headteachers utilised student voice activity to expand and enhance their curriculum offer. For example, the headteacher at School Two claimed:

We do a lot of children's voice type activities here and all these additional learning experiences expand and enhance the curriculum. Our children get the chance to experience lots of real life problems and to apply skills they've learnt. I really believe a narrow curriculum produces narrow-minded children. (School One: 39)

This mirrors the description of competence as defined by Carver (1997) which includes developing new abilities in new situations and being appreciated for one's talents (Carver, 1997). The theme of new or alternative learning experiences was common. For example, when discussing what students gained from being part of the school council the headteacher at School Five outlined a range of new learning experiences that might not normally have come through the curriculum – associated with understanding democracy – along with some capabilities around individual students collectively representing the views of a group. The headteacher stated that:

First would be learning what a democratic process is. Also because there are certain rules that you have to follow while you are on the school council. They learn what does a chair does, they learn about holding meetings and taking minutes. They learn about debating and they develop an understanding of their roles and responsibilities. So they learn to distinguish between their own opinions or your viewpoint and the viewpoint of your class. They learn about voting and they learn about compromise. (School Five: 6)

According to Inman and Burke (2002) involvement in student voice activity around democratic processes require skills and competences relating to areas such as managing meetings, setting agendas and taking minutes; a view supplemented by

Fielding and Bragg (2003). Developing these skills has been highlighted here. Carver (1997) defines the application of competence where students and sometimes adults learn, acquire and apply new skills and are valued for their contributions (Carver, 1997). Costello et al (2000) prescribe changes in structures and vehicles so young people assume more active roles within the classroom and organisation (Costello et al, 2000). The provision of alternative learning experiences allied to student voice activity, in this study, appears to reflect this claim – of students assuming more active roles – but here this extends to both children and young people. Alternative learning experiences along with skills that could be developed was expanded upon by the headteacher at School Three when describing the process of becoming a school councillor on their school council:

To become a school councillor you have to respond to an advertisement that goes up at the beginning of the year, you have to complete an application form with a supporting statement as to why you think you'd be a good school councillor, and then you're interviewed by the head teacher – myself, and the deputy. So it's taken extremely seriously. The school councillors are high profile in the school, they've got a badge, they would be our ambassadors for showing visitors around the school, they sit at the front of the assembly with the head teacher or whoever is taking the assembly. (School Three: 2)

The headteacher at School Three claimed that this selection and interview process mirrored a life-long skill students would have to develop, demonstrating how headteachers linked student voice activity to real life situations outside of school life:

For the school councillors themselves there's a huge amount of status from getting that position. The process that they go through is a mini version of a life-long skill that they will need to develop (School Three: 8)

The use of new or alternative learning experiences through student voice activity and possible links to a future in a business market place was highlighted by the headteacher at School Four. In discussing student voice activity related to creating an

enterprise the headteacher explained how they gave £300 to the school council to start an enterprise of their choosing. The students had to conduct their own research and make key decisions as to how the enterprise would operate. Here we have an example of students being able to develop or improve skills and competences through experiencing new learning opportunities that might not normally come through the curriculum. The headteacher stated that:

The school council has been given a sum of money. They have been given about £300 to start them off on an enterprise – that could be selling smoothies, it could be stationery, a school shop, but they have to research and find out what they want to sell and what they think, and who their market is going to be and whether as a school we should be a profit making organisation. It's for them to research. (School Four: 57)

The idea that student voice activity could develop new skills and competences through student voice activity was common. Headteachers gave a range of examples where they harnessed student voice activity to develop skills, or recognised the skills gained through certain activities. For example, in discussing how the accredited training programme for leadership for students was beneficial, the headteacher at School Four pointed out that students had the opportunity to develop new skills and apply those skills:

It's beneficial for the students because they have learnt certain leadership skills, as opposed to just being good at basketball, or playing the game. But actually they have to lead and tell, teach someone else how to play the game. (School Four: 27)

In describing how the school council was involved in conducting research into the quality of school meals, the headteacher at School Five explained that during this process some students had the opportunity to gain a range of skills, claiming that:

You can see there's some work there around research skills that they've gained, I mean the ones who designed and carried out the surveys and some skills around analysing the results and presenting their report to the governing body. (School Five: 25)

Goodwillie (1993) champions student voice activity that engages pupils in solving real-life problems; a view that is echoed by Takanishi (1993). The headteacher at School Two substantiated their claims, arguing that student voice activity presented both an opportunity for, and a vehicle to apply different skills in real-life situations.

Our specialism is business and enterprise so we devote time to developing foundation skills such as self-directedness, motivation, critical thinking and interpretation skills as well as functional skills. Pupil consultation and decision making exercises give the school the opportunity to apply them in real situations. The pupil parliament have come up with a number of enterprising solutions such as best use of flexible learning spaces, safer travel around the school and income generating projects. (School Two: 18)

Mitra (2004) points out the explicit link between the structures within which student voice activity takes place and the fundamental impact this has on what students are able to experience and gain. This notion is reflected well at School Two, particularly in the structures and opportunities in which student voice activity takes place. In addition headteachers appear to reflect the claim of Fielding (2001) that student voice activity can allow students to learn, develop and enhance a whole range of skills and competences, rooted in real life situations. In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to the role of 'potential' in terms of the possibility for developing and increasing competences and skills and engaging in alternative learning experiences through student voice activity. In these descriptions there were clear examples and illustrations of this from headteachers of students experiencing alternative learning opportunities, developing skills and applying them to real life situations and being appreciated for their talents.

Summarising Potential

From across the five schools there were 82 quotes and explanations describing the role of potential. It is clear that student voice activity had the potential to deliver a range of gains for students and be beneficial for schools, mirroring Carver's (1997) assertions on the possibilities student voice activity can offer all parties. In discussing the management of student voice activity headteachers alluded to a number of areas which can be grouped under the heading of 'potential'. They included: 24 quotes and explanations describing the possibility for developing and increasing a sense of agency; 26 quotes and explanations describing the possibility for developing and increasing a sense of belonging; and, 32 quotes and explanations describing the possibility for developing and increasing competences. Students were involved in a variety of decision-making endeavours, some leading to small changes, some leading to enormous changes, like the changes to the design of a multi-million pound new school build from the Building Schools for the Future (DfES, 2004b) programme. As students became more involved in bringing about change, their agency grew – according to headteachers – and both aspects required managing. The connections between students and adults were often cited as becoming stronger or deeper as a result of involvement in student voice activity; in many instances being cited as the key process that made disenfranchised students reengage positively with their school. Softer outputs such as improvements in self-esteem, confidence and motivation were also cited. The potential for student voice activity to develop new skills and competences and for students to apply those skills in different contexts resonated strongly through each school. Enhancements to, or enrichment of the curriculum was often cited along with problem solving in real-life contexts. There were examples of using money to resource a project for a particular goal which offered alternative learning experiences for those students involved, and could be useful skills in the future. Potential, as defined here, has a role in the implicit framework headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity.

Conclusion

Headteachers voices which whispered softly through other studies and the literature have been brought to the fore. The technique of cross-case comparison has helped to draw together commonalities and generalisations from across five schools.

Triangulating data across five cases has led to four distinguishable groupings being identified: that of power; purpose; participation and potential. The cross-case comparison of 81 quotes and explanations describing the role of power revealed that power can be conceptualised through the aspects of 'Initiation', 'Regulation', 'Ownership' and 'Termination'. These four aspects described the complex nature of power; from the beginning and end of each student voice activity, along with the pervasive journey it took during each activity. The exchanges of power, transactions between parties and the shaping of each party through power dynamics were key results from this study. The cross-case comparison of 121 quotes and explanations describing the role of purpose revealed that purpose can be conceptualised through the aspects of 'Tenet', 'Intentions', 'Experiences' and 'Outcomes'. These four aspects described the complex nature of purpose; from the philosophical positioning and intention to change things for the better, right through to gains for each party from the different stages of each student voice activity. In particular, the difference between experiencing an activity, and gaining through this experience, to generating outputs or outcomes from it. Whose purpose an activity served, how change occurred and dualities in philosophical positioning were key results from this study. The cross-case comparison of 62 quotes and explanations describing the role of participation revealed that participation can be conceptualised through the aspects of 'Accessibility', 'Choice' and 'Voice-equity'. These three aspects described the complex nature of participation; from democratically-laden values such as choice and fairness, to resource-heavy dimensions linked to access and the capability of individual students. Participatory mechanisms, channels for voices to be heard correctly, and time and space for student voice activity were key results from this study. The cross-case comparison of 82 quotes and explanations describing the role of potential revealed that potential can be conceptualised through the aspects of 'Agency', 'Belonging' and 'Competences'. These three aspects described the complex nature of potential; from students' beliefs in their ability to bring about change and their attitudes towards their schools, through to actually bringing about

change and forming more positive relationships with the parts of the school community. In addition the time and space for developing new skills and capabilities through student voice activity and the way in which those experiences enhanced and enriched the curriculum offer – in a relevant, real life sense – were key results from this study.

What is clear from the results is that these four areas along with their fourteen associated aspects all have important roles in the framework headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity. It is my view that the research methods and techniques used in this study have amplified the collective voice of headteachers. It is to that collective voice we now turn with a concluding chapter which answers the main research question and the four supplementary questions.

Chapter Six: Conclusions

Introduction

In this chapter the conclusions of this study are presented. The four supplementary research questions regarding the roles of power, purpose, participation and potential are answered. The role of power is broken down into the power to initiate student voice activity; regulating power; owning power; and, the power to terminate student voice activity. It concludes by rejecting a transactional, empower-disempower model, favouring instead power as a tool to shape thinking of all parties involved. The role of purpose is divided into its tenet; intended purpose; experiencing student voice activity; and, purposeful outcomes. It concludes by challenging the assumption that student voice is indefinable and acknowledges the duality of improvement in different ways for different parties. The role of participation is split into the accessibility of student voice activity; the ability to choose; and, the equitableness of student voice activity. It concludes by attesting to the variety of channels, avenues and spaces required to hear differing aspects of different types of voice in different ways. The role of potential is separated into students' agency; their sense of belonging; and, potential to develop and apply skills. It concludes by acknowledging the vast range of alternative learning experiences parties utilised to deliver student voice activity through and the self-fulfilling cycle of improvement associated with improvements in one's sense of agency. Power, purpose, participation and potential are then drawn together into a conceptual framework. The main research question is answered concluding that headteachers draw upon this conceptual framework to manage student voice activity and that this conceptual framework can be articulated as a 4P Model. This thesis draws to a close by identifying limitations to the research, its contribution to the literature and current practice and my reflections on this journey.

Supplementary Question (a)

What is the role of power in the implicit framework headteachers draw upon for managing student voice activity?

Power very clearly is a key component in the framework that headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity. 'Initiation'; 'Regulation'; 'Ownership'; and, 'Termination' are all aspects of power. Headteachers acknowledged, understood and utilised those aspects of power in the management of student voice activity.

Power: Initiation

Headteachers believed that students had the power to initiate student voice activity, in some cases on their own terms, counter to the assertions of Carroll et al (1999).

There were structures, channels and spaces which had been developed in each institution to support and encourage this. Terms such as 'empower', 'empowering', 'empowerment', 'disempower' were conspicuously absent. Headteachers actively encouraged students to take a broad focus when considering areas they wanted to start new initiatives in. Students in particular led a number of initiatives which from their perspectives, according to their headteachers, were negatively underpinned (for example: school meals; bullying; toilets). This is an interesting point to raise as it places a number of student voice activities in the social, community, environmental and structural realms.

Headteachers exercised their power to commence or initiate student voice activity and did so when it was purposeful for the school or in the best interests of the students, from their perspectives (for example: PASS survey (Williams, Whittome & Watts, 2005); Assessment for Learning (DCSF, 2008b); More equal school). There were a number of instances where student voice activity was jointly initiated by the school and its students. There were also a variety of examples which demonstrated how individual activities were sometimes part of larger, more complex student voice activity and in many case overlapped and intertwined (for example: Building Schools for the Future (DfES, 2004b); Arts Block New Build; Playground Redesign). In some cases one activity was initiated by one party which led to the initiation of

another activity by the other party; forming a chain of activity. Some student voice activities were simple while others had associated dependencies some of which required other student voice activities to be commenced by one party or jointly. This challenges a 'them-and-us' perspective and demonstrates how student voice activity can be a co-production of a range of parties over different times and spaces

Power: Regulation

During the actual activity phase or its lifespan; the time frame and space within which it took place, headteachers in this study evidenced how different parties could control or direct most components within a specific student voice activity (for example: money attached to bullying issues; school meals; survey of fairness of lunchtime supervisors). Some activities were controlled from start to finish by students; in others students had the power to invite the school or the headteacher into the activity at a point of their choosing; usually to take forwards a decision which needed adult cooperation or additional resources. This was an important aspect particularly when students needed time and space to develop ideas or test things out. In other cases headteachers exercised control, in particular in matters relating to teaching staff. There was acknowledgement that different forms of communication with appropriate channels were required, especially when venturing into uncharted territory, an argument cited by Pickering (1997) Fielding (2001) and Rudduck et al (1996). Communication and shared dialogue underpinned these shifting power dynamics. This highlights the complex range of cooperative relationships between the range of parties over different times and spaces.

Headteachers in this study evidenced how different parties had the ability to regulate the involvement of others and to alter the scope of an activity (for example: lunchtime surveys; improving teaching surveys; outcomes of surveys). In particular this power was utilised by the students and the headteacher to control the flow of information and limit others from accessing it. For students this was about protecting individuals who may have pointed out a deficit about an adult. For the headteacher it was about concealing things from students when it was in their best interest for the information

not to be publicised, particularly deficits for the school. Issues of trust, mistrust, openness and protectionism arise here

Power: Ownership

Headteachers in this study evidenced how different parties owned student voice activity and where that ownership exchanged, interchanged, was shared and transitioned between different parties over a period of time (for example: lunchtime surveys; health schools award; building a swimming pool in the attic space). Where the required change, reform or issue was owned by students, a range of avenues were provided for them to develop and test ideas. Time and space was also provided in which dialogue could be constructed. It is here Smyth (2006) asserts that students can bring their own cultures, histories, aspirations and stories to the fore and it is in doing so that the most transformative endeavours flourish. In other cases the headteacher invited students into an activity – in many instances using them in effect to problem solve on behalf of the school – but the headteacher and school retained ownership of it. There were issues which were important for the students but less or unimportant to the headteacher. Conversely there were issues which were important for the headteacher but less or unimportant to the students. The value different parties placed on issues that affected them along with tactics to generate others interest or give them a stake or shock them into action was evident. There was also a growing understanding of the negative effects of not acknowledging the value students placed on issues that affect them. This highlights the complex range of interrelationships of values, issues and aspirations which arise through student voice activity.

Power: Termination

Headteachers articulated that students had the power to terminate or end student voice activity. There were structures, channels and spaces which had been developed in each institution to enable this, in particular when an activity had come to its natural conclusion and had to be terminated as it was no longer required (for example: successful transition mentoring; peer mentoring). There were a number of areas

where negative effects caused students to insist on the termination of student voice activity (For example, teaching interviews; Assessment for Learning (DCSF, 2008b)). This is an interesting point to raise as it demonstrates that some well-intentioned student voice activities can impair or cause an aspect of school life to deteriorate, from the perspective of the students. The power to terminate was an important aspect of power.

In some cases headteachers directly terminated student voice activity. In other cases they used a number of techniques including the setting of time limits to bring some activities to an enforced end. The justification was that in not doing so would allow activities to go on and on with no discernible progress or change or with time being wasted or poorly used (for example: researching school enterprises). Who could terminate student voice activity and how that happened was a key aspect of the role of power, as defined in this study.

Concluding Power

Power is a key concept in the conceptual framework headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity. Initiation, regulation, ownership and termination are all aspects of power. Headteachers acknowledged, understood and utilised those aspects of power to manage student voice activity. They demonstrated a deep understanding of it which was evidenced by what their schools had achieved through it; reflecting Taylor and Robinson's (2009) assertion that headteacher's theoretical understanding of power would be reflected in student voice achievement. The incredible array of activities and ways in which students were involved was quite incredible! The lack of evidence to support a 'radical pedagogy' view of power was startling; headteachers did not appear to recognise or acknowledge the empower-disempower dynamic. The idea of quantities of power being given or taken or power transactions was not evident here either. A view formed which was more akin to both parties sharing and exercising power in different ways; in many cases with a view to 'shaping' each other. Utilising Bragg's (2007) 'tool for thinking', a more Foucauldian view could provide a deeper, more sophisticated understanding of power dynamics and the management of student voice. Foucauldian perspectives on

governmentality and Bragg's (2007) discussion on it, with respect to student voice activity is an area worthy of further study.

Supplementary Question (b)

What is the role of purpose in the implicit framework headteachers draw upon for managing student voice activity?

Purpose very clearly is a key component in the framework that headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity. 'Tenet'; 'Intentions'; 'Experiences'; and, 'Outcomes' are all aspects of power. Headteachers acknowledged, understood and utilised those aspects of purpose in the management of student voice activity.

Purpose: Tenet

Headteachers in this study generally espoused an inside-out philosophy (Noyes, 2005) with regard to the tenet of student voice activity. Students were principally placed at the centre of student voice activity; its purpose was to serve them. A view espoused was the organisation as a secondary or additional benefactor. The notion that student gains led to organisational gains was strengthened further by the supposition that students could take improvement, in all its forms, to a new level.

The outside-in philosophy (Noyes, 2005) with regard to the tenet of student voice activity caused discomfort with macro-level directives around consultation to be recorded in the SEF (DfES & Ofsted, 2004; Great Britain. *Education Act 2005*) along with 'Ofsted consequences'. In contrast meso-level directives were acceptable. These were justified with statements such as being in the best interests of the school whether the students realised it or not (for example: assessment for Learning (DCSF, 2008b)). However headteachers did wrestle with student voice activity that served the school or was designed by the school, acknowledging worries about tokenism and manipulation.

Purpose: Intentions

Headteachers in this study acknowledged the importance in the design of student voice activity of change, reform, difference making and improvement – in effect their intentions. Headteachers view of student voice activity and its perceived ability to affect different realms was remarkable. Foci included: curricular; social; environmental; pedagogic; regulatory; performative; inclusive; physical; structural; and, relational. What was even more extraordinary was its actual ability to do so. This reflects Rowe's (2003) assertion that student voice activity can improve every aspect of school life. Headteachers claimed it was students who delivered during student voice activity therefore making them the real change agents or difference makers. A value espoused was that their efforts would always be supported even if things did not change or bring about the desired reform. Headteachers believed that student voice activity which was designed and led by students was always purposeful for students because what underpinned it was something that matters to them. They did not always see, understand or agree with the purpose of some headteacher led student voice activity, mirroring Fielding's (1999) assertion that students 'in contrast to adults' see different issues and see issues differently.

Purpose: Experiences

The experiential journey was held in high regards by headteachers. There was wide acknowledgement of its ability to nurture and develop internal physiognomy including confidence, self-esteem, motivation and engagement. In particular it was highlighted how student voice activity could provide a learning-scaffold and structure for students to experience 'learning from failure' in a safe and controlled way. There were several examples where the intent was to reform but nothing changed and some which in the end failed. These 'learning from failure' experiences were to promote opportunities for developing critical self-reflection, critical self-analysis and critical self-evaluation – a range of higher-order metacognitive capabilities.

Headteachers revealed how student voice activity which was designed for a particular purpose ended up producing other additional unplanned benefits (for example: playground research) particularly in terms of new knowledge for the school. This

showed how the experience of student voice activity could be meaningful for both the students and the school. It is this partnership of dual purposefulness that creates the conditions for shared meaningful learning experiences for adults and students in schools (Mitra, 2004). Headteachers also utilised student voice activity to help identify the voiceless, disengaged and disillusioned (for example: PASS survey (Williams, Whittome & Watts, 2005)). Student voice activity through students was the key resource to engage the disengaged and to include the excluded (for example: Playground Friends; Lonely Stop; Pupil Interviews).

Purpose: Outcomes

The outputs or outcomes of student voice activity are the physical evidence of change and reform. There were a wide range of benefits and gains for students, for schools and for both. Headteachers drove student voice activity that improved the school (for example: Healthy Schools (DfES & NHSS, 2004); school rules; 'Active Mark'; equal school). They were also comfortable with students driving student voice activity that improved the school for students (for example: school meals; toilets; healthy tuck shop; anti bullying). A wide range of internal benefits for students (for example: improved self-esteem; confidence) and external benefits which included improvements in the school environment were cited by headteachers.

Concluding Purpose

Purpose is a key concept in the conceptual framework that headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity. Tenet, intention, experiences and outcomes are all aspects of purpose. Headteachers acknowledged, understood and utilised those aspects of purpose to manage student voice activity. They demonstrated a deep understanding of it which was evidenced by what their schools had achieved through it. Headteachers acknowledged that the outputs or outcomes of some student voice activity could be beneficial for students and the school at the same time, and sometimes in very different ways highlighting the dual nature of purpose in student voice activity. This challenges Whitty and Wisby's (2007) assertion that there is a lack of clarity regarding what the purpose of student voice activity in schools actually

is or should be. Beliefs, values and principles were evident, along with an understanding of the need for avenues and channels for communication and dialogue that would assist in addressing the variety of perspectives on what particular activities were about or would achieve. They were clear that addressing those perspectives from the outset was one way of bridging the emancipatory nature of student voice activity for students with institutional melioration. They believed the gains from student voice activity led to improvements in the day to day experience for students and claimed this was school improvement in its widest sense. The most impressive part of conducting this research was discovering the extraordinary changes and reforms which had occurred. The transformations cited and changes in cultures and structures are remarkable!

Supplementary Question (c)

What is the role of participation in the implicit framework headteachers draw upon for managing student voice activity?

Participation very clearly is a key component in the framework that headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity. 'Accessibility'; 'Choice'; and, 'Voice-equity' are all aspects of participation. Headteachers acknowledged, understood and utilised those aspects of participation in the management of student voice activity.

Participation: Accessibility

It was widely acknowledged that in order to be able to participate in student voice activity it had to be accessible. Alongside this was the recognition of the need to address barriers to access. There were a number of activities (for example: school councils) which involved students from across all age ranges, bringing into focus the need to manage differentiation within student voice activity. Headteachers provided resources such as deputy and assistant headteachers to help manage differentiation and to be facilitators so ensuring students' needs did not create barriers to access. Those students with additional or challenging needs could tap into a range of resources to help them access an activity. Some student voice activity by design only required participation of certain groups. There were times when headteachers created

barriers to stop students being able to participate in student voice activity, usually in relation to protecting staff or because they felt the school wasn't ready to experience that next higher echelon; but at least this was acknowledged indicating a clear understanding of what was achievable at that moment in time.

Participation: Choice

Headteachers in this study believed that students' involvement in decision making was important and that students should be able to see the value in it and realise the benefits of their own involvement. What underpinned this was clarity about the principle of individual choice – the ability or right to choose to engage in or disassociate from student voice activity. Personal autonomy was a strong theme when discussed in principle. Headteachers were also clear that sometimes it was in the best interests of the students for them to be involved, insisting they would see the value of it in the end (for example: Assessment for Learning (DCSF, 2008b) for Learning). This passive participation in some cases produced inverse or negative effects which included resistance, challenge and disinformation – students providing incorrect information as a form of protest. Foucault (1991) asserts that power is productive in nature and where there is power there will be resistance, opposition and counter-compliance.

Headteachers were conformable with students who chose to disengage or disassociate from certain student voice activities as long as the individual student was happy about their choice or the reasons that underpinned that choice. They were also clear that the greater challenge lay in providing enough channels and appropriate avenues so students could choose the channel or avenue that suited them best, thus ensuring active participation through choice. It is not possible to conclude whether any had achieved this or felt they had got close to it.

Participation: Voice-equity

Headteachers in this study were aware of issues relating to the equity in student voice from the individual level, through to group level, through to collective or whole school level. In particular the need to provide lots of avenues, channels and spaces to

capture, filter and manage the cacophony of competing voices (Reay, 2006). They were also aware of the need to provide corresponding avenues, channels and spaces to reciprocate. Headteachers recognised the inherent issues with individual students trying to represent the wishes and want of a group and distinguishing this from their own opinions. To that end they endeavoured to provide resources and training to mitigate against this.

Headteachers recognise the different types of 'self' and associated voice (Arnot & Reay, 2006) that each student has and the need to capture them and respond appropriately. The differing realms of activity and the involvements of students in them is a great testament to this. Headteachers provided vehicles for capturing and responding to pedagogic voice (for example: Assessment for Learning (DCSF, 2008b) for Learning; moderating teaching; PASS survey (Williams, Whittome & Watts, 2005); purple folders), social voice (for example: circle time; playground friends; lonely stop; buddying; mentorship) community or group voice (for example: school council; pupil parliament; student governors; catering sub group). There were also a number of schemes to try and improve one's management of one's own voice (for example: Philosophy for Children (Sharp, Reed & Lipman, 1992); Leadership scheme).

Headteachers highlighted a particular tension between 'missing, lost or unheard voices' and the power of silence. It was recognised that silence could be a protest, apathy, satisfaction or happiness or could indeed be missing voices. To that end they endeavoured to open additional communication channels and avenues to ensure the message each voice carried was a valid one.

Concluding Participation

Participation is a key concept in the conceptual framework that headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity. Accessibility, choice and voice-equity are all aspects of participation. Headteachers acknowledged, understood and utilised those aspects of participation to manage student voice activity. They demonstrated a deep understanding of it which was evidenced by what their schools had achieved through

it. A range of activities captured different voices in different contexts in different ways utilising a range of channels and avenues, and in some cases new structures. Headteachers understanding of the time and space needed for student voice activity and the capability to provide it allies well with one dimension of Fielding's (2001) model for practising dialogic democracy. The fluid, multifaceted and changing nature of different activities and the associated challenges to participation were widely acknowledged and in many cases addressed. It would be difficult to assert that each school had a culture of participation commensurate with the European description presented by Davies et al (2000) but all were certainly heading in the right direction.

Supplementary Question (d)

What is the role of potential in the implicit framework headteachers draw upon for managing student voice activity?

Potential very clearly is a key component in the framework that headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity. 'Agency'; 'Belonging'; and, 'Competence' are all aspects of potential. Headteachers acknowledged, understood and utilised those aspects of potential in the management of student voice activity.

Potential: Agency

Through student voice activity headteachers believed individual students could have, develop and increase the asset of agency. They evidenced how students had authority and influence over decision making, and could exert power in a range of situations. Students were given opportunities to reflect upon, discuss and learn from their exercising of agency. This led to a better understanding of their own agency and what was possible – their sense of agency or their belief that they could change or improve things. Headteachers linked that sense of agency, coupled with the exercising of agency, claiming it bred confidence and that increase in confidence led students to want to be more proactive in being involved in decision making. This in turn fuelled an increasing sense of agency, indicating that this process was self-

fulfilling. Headteachers believed that this cycle could lead to culture of improvement.

Potential: Belonging

Through student voice activity headteachers believed individual students could have, develop and increase the asset of belonging. They believed that students felt as if they were being listened to, giving them a better connection to the school (For example: school councils; pupil parliament; student-led surveys; student-led research). Headteachers evidenced how some students got to work with other students, overcoming divisive structures such as class or year groupings (school councils; pupil parliament; transition mentors). In addition they highlighted these opportunities in the context of overcoming social divisions between those who felt connected to the school and those who did not, particularly in playgrounds and recreational areas (For example: lonely stops; playground friends; buddying systems; school council; pupil parliament). Headteachers believed that student voice activity could present the opportunity for students to work with other adults they might not normally, overcoming managerial structures (governors; school meals provider). They cited how students established different types of meaningful working relationships with other adults, moving beyond ones which were defined by a pedagogical, curricular or pastoral basis (For example: new school build; architects; Council staff)

Potential: Competences and skills

Through student voice activity headteachers believed individual students could have, develop and increase the asset of competence. They believed that student voice activity could present the opportunity for students to experience real-life problems and have the chance to solve them. Headteachers used student voice activity to enhance the curriculum offer and provide alternative learning opportunities. The gaining of skills and competences from one situation allowed headteachers to develop new structures so that those skills and competences could be applied in new situations. This gave students the opportunity to have more active and varied roles

within school, augmenting the claim by Costello et al (2000) of changing structures and vehicles so students can assume more active roles (For example: BSF; associate governor; healthy tuck shop; playground friends).

Concluding Potential

Potential is a key concept in the conceptual framework that headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity. Agency, belonging and competence are all aspects of potential. Headteachers acknowledged, understood and utilised those aspects of potential to manage student voice activity. They demonstrated a deep understanding of it which was evidenced by what their schools had achieved through it. A clear understanding of the tangible gains in the form of skills and competences and the developmental frameworks required to support them; particularly alternative learning experiences and scaffolds for successfully learning from failure, emerged. The more ethereal aspects around self-esteem, confidence, feeling connected, and being able to exert influence were valued highly and headteachers utilised student voice activity to develop and increase these assets and, more importantly, students used student voice activity to increase these assets (Mitra, 2008). It could be argued that headteachers and students in this study had almost reached the state of what Fielding (2004) terms 'collegial reciprocity'; the state by which they could bring about reform and shape each other.

Headteachers espoused a view commensurate with Hansen's (1979) prophetic self-fulfilling cycle, or "Pandora's box" effect and demonstrated ways in which they had embraced developing and changing power relationships and dynamics and provided spaces, structures and systems to harness it. This included: changing environments; engendering new cultures; governmental technologies for shaping and the reciprocation it brings; understanding the new connections that define the relationships between power, culture, structure and the individual. It is in doing so that headteachers were able to realise the amazing possibilities student voice activity has to offer, maximising the potential of what could be achieved in that time and space.

Main Research Question

What implicit framework do Headteachers draw upon for managing student voice activity?

The findings indicate that the implicit framework headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity is a conceptual framework. The findings indicate that within this implicit framework used by headteachers, four distinguishable concepts can be identified: power; purpose; participation and potential: 'Power' is indicated by initiation, regulation, ownership and termination; 'Purpose' is related to tenet, intentions, experiences and outcomes; 'Participation' is associated with accessibility, choice and voice-equity; and, 'Potential' is seen in terms of agency, belonging and competence. The findings also indicate that these four concepts are interdependent, interconnected and interfluent.

The findings indicate that within each aspect there are a range of considerations which don't fit easily onto continua. They are about the different perspectives and concepts headteachers take into account which include: the individual student perspective; groups of students; students as a collective; staff perspectives; the school perspective; and, finally considering the students, staff and school as a collective. The conceptual framework headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity is in fact a power-purpose-participation-potential framework and can be articulated as a '4P Model' through which they consider a range of concepts and perspectives – this aids them in the management of student voice activity. This thesis presents the 4P Model.

The '4P' Model

The 4P Model articulates a conceptual framework which headteachers can draw upon to manage student voice activity. It comprises 4P's: power; purpose; participation; and, potential. These four concepts contain distinguishable aspects, discovered through and articulated by this thesis. When examining current management practices with regard to student voice activity headteachers should examine all the concepts which define power. Who has the power to initiate student voice activity

and who has the power to terminate it are key aspects of power. It should not be viewed as something that is given by one party to another in an empower-disempower continuum; it should be viewed as something which all parties own, with its real nature being the ability to shape thinking (at initiation) and reshape thinking (at termination). How it is controlled and regulated during student voice activity is dependent upon whose thinking is being shaped or reshaped at key moments along the journey. Viewed through this lens, the true power of student voice activity is in shaping improvement.

In analysing current management practices with regard to student voice activity headteachers should examine all the concepts which define purpose. Whose principle purpose student voice activity serves and the intention to change things for the better are quintessential philosophical aspects which define purpose. It is here where voices regarding what is truly important at that precise moment in time are heard...the importance of which cannot be understated because it is in purpose that the range of voices or the different voices or different aspects of 'self' are heard and mobilised. The ability of students to change the school from the inside-out, or a policy to change the school from the outside-in should not be seen as competing agendas; it is in the drive or the will to change an aspect of school life for the better. It is likely that it will serve both parties differently. Whether there are gains or change from experiencing the journey or from the outcome of student voice activity, the likelihood is that someone or something will gain – making student voice activity a worthwhile endeavour. Viewed through this lens, the true purpose of student voice activity is in the duality of improvement.

Whilst investigating current management practices with regard to student voice activity headteachers should examine all the concepts which define participation. Who can access student voice activity and who can choose to take part, opt out or remain silent are key aspects of participation. It should not be viewed as something aspirational but unachievable in a practical sense – it is here that the channels, avenues, contexts, spaces, times, resources, structures and cultures really come to the fore. It is here that providing the broadest range of the above, leads to hearing the widest range of voices. This is where voice-equity becomes a central facet – in

hearing every individual voice, the possibly of hearing the different ‘self’ within each individual voice comes to fruition. The ability to hear all facets of individual’s voice – for example, the social voice, the pedagogic voice, the pastoral voice, the emotional voice, aspirational voice – translates directly into what aspects of school life can be change for the better – for example a social aspect, pedagogical aspect, pastoral aspect, emotional aspect, aspirational aspect. Viewed through this lens, the nature of participation within student voice activity is in capturing the true voice which can result in holistic improvement.

When studying current management practices with regard to student voice activity headteachers should examine all the concepts which define potential. Who has the agency to change things or the belief in their own sense of agency and its ability to bring about change are key aspects of potential. Change or the aspiration to change, can be sought to rectify a negative and attempt to make it positive or to do something differently or better than previously. Involvement in change can lead to a greater sense of agency and offer opportunities to be involved in markedly different learning experiences which in turn can lead to new skills and competences. The prospect of working with other students or other adults, often keep apart by school structural boundaries, offers opportunities which most other school arrangements cannot compete with. The crossing of current structures or circumvention of current structures can open up possibilities for further gains, engendering an increasing sense of improvement, in effect creating the conditions for a culture of improving. Viewed through this lens, the true potential of student voice activity is in engendering a culture of improvement.

Headteachers should draw together all concepts relating to power, purpose, participation and potential and cross-reference each. This could be particularly useful when thinking about a specific student voice activity. For example, participation is about the channels, avenues and spaces to hear and act upon different types of voice; purpose mobilises that voice; power shapes the individuals involved; and, potential is the realisation of gains or application of gains. A student voice activity examined in this way can provide key information about how that activity can be managed. Alternatively, potential in the exercising of agency; participation to hear that voice;

power to shape parties; and, purpose to mobilise voice can achieve the same aim with regard to how to manage an activity. The thesis concludes by articulating a '4P Model' for headteachers to draw upon to manage student voice activity. Through this model the perspectives of students and the school can be considered. An understanding of current management practice viewed through the lens of the 4P Model may aid headteachers in considering the possibilities of student voice activity, and the management journey they might take to maximise its possibilities.

Limitations of this Research

The sampling strategy focused on schools whereby student voice activity was well developed and positive – an attempt to maximise what could be learnt in the time given – but this is also a limitation of the study. It did not take account of any negative aspects of student voice activity, nor did it explore schools where headteachers chose not to pursue the student voice agenda or schools which were tokenistic towards it. Nor did the study pursue schools where student voice activity had led to negative consequences. In addition the study did not explore the views, power, authority or influence of other members of staff or significant adults and their impact on how it was or could be managed. It also did not explore children or young people and their experiences of it, in particular aspects of purpose, participation and potential gains. The study focused on the management of student voice activity and headteachers perspectives. The research sites were instrumentally selected (Feagin et al, 1991; Stake, 1995; Tellis, 1997; Yin, 2009) to maximise what could be learnt in the allotted time about headteacher perspectives and to answer the research questions. Other participants, other research sites or the inclusion of children and young people may have produced different results but would have required different research questions.

Generalising from this Research

Walker's assertion (1993) regarding acceptable truths within a single case which have little linkage to any wider truth – the notion of the challenge to external validity in case study research – can be challenged up to a point by this study. The use of

multiple case sites and cross-case comparison yielded fittingness – Schofield’s definition of generalisability in case study research (Schofield, 1993) – between the different frameworks which each headteacher drew upon to manage student voice activity. What cannot be claimed is whether an additional ten cases, one hundred cases or one thousand cases would have revealed the same set of generalised results. The inability to statistically generalise is a limitation of this research design; however Yin (1994) attests that analytical generalisations as a robust method whereby previously developed theory from other case studies can be used as a template to compare results of a case study – a method used here in cross-case comparison.

Further Study Possibilities

I wanted to contribute towards the knowledge regarding the management of student voice activity, and in particular to help address a gap that exists. Five headteachers and I believe we have achieved something really useful here. I have a number of hopes for this work; firstly, that the 4P model can be shared and utilised by headteachers and that they find it useful. Secondly, I hope other academics continue to expand this area of investigating the management of student voice activity. This study could be expanded upon by including more teachers and significant adults in schools, as opposed to just headteachers. It could also be expanded or built upon by investigating the perspectives of children and young people on how it is managed, or their perspectives on the 4P’s or a deeper exploration of each P.

Reflections and Final Thoughts

This thesis has taken five headteachers and the researcher on a unique journey of discovery. In answering the research questions new knowledge and new insights have been gained into the management of student voice activity and perspectives on how to manage it and what is possible. That journey has discovered some incredible things which add to the current literature and body of knowledge regarding student voice activity and are discussed below.

In the current literature is there a lack of deep recognition, definitive description, anecdotal claim or aspirational view of the extraordinary journeys and results which can be achieved through student voice activity. Here is where this study has something to offer. For example the journey and the results involving students stopping the decision for a multimillion pound school new build to go ahead – convincing a headteacher that they had got it wrong and proving that claim through their own research – and then redesigning the new build based on their collective assertions which resulted in improvements to the overall design. The magnitude of this cannot be understated: the learning that took place in a real-life context that really mattered; a headteacher venturing into unknown territory that involved risk; the overall improvement for all in the school at that current moment in time but also for students in the future; the legacy of improved agency and willingness of students to be involved in other areas of decision making; the internal challenge provided by students to the current quality of service and ways to improve it; and, an exemplar for other headteachers to view. This study provided a wealth of examples relating to gains for schools and gains for students from being involved in student voice activity which could be of great use to current headteachers interested in expanding their knowledge of what can work.

The complex interrelationships between students and adults in schools and the impact these have on the inner workings of student voice activity are clouded in the current literature by a range of perspectives. Here is where this study has something to offer. Headteachers' perspectives on a transactional nature of power leading to participation were not evident; neither were terms like empowerment or disempowerment. Instead a much more complex picture emerged with co-productions, chains of activity, interdependent and interrelated activity; the sharing of power; and, the use student voice activity to shape thinking about future activity by different parties. There were many examples cited where one student voice activity, after bringing about some change shaped the thinking of either the headteacher or some or all of the students and led to new activity. This in turn either shaped new views or revealed hidden voices which then led to new activity. This sharing of power, co-production of activity and shaping of thinking allies well with Foucauldian perspectives on governmentality. This study highlights the complex, interrelated shaping processes

that take place through student voice activity and as a result of it. Thus, the purpose of student voice activity both in experience and outcome affects the potential gains – in terms of thinking about change (agency) and interrelationships or connections to each other – and is interconnected with the sharing of power and who participates and why.

There is recognition in the current literature concerning the differing types of voice students have in different contexts – social, pedagogic, community, individual etc – and contrasting views and definitions on what student voice activity actually is. Here is where this study has something to offer. Headteachers' understanding of students' differing types of 'self' and associated voice was complemented by a range of channels, avenues and contexts within which those voices could be heard. Allied to this were time, space and resources to supplement student voice activity. This was augmented by changes in structures and cultures leading to gains in students' sense of agency and their wish to be involved in other areas of decision making. This in turn revealed other types of 'self', or new or different voices – sometimes utilising existing channels, avenues and context, sometimes requiring new ones, along with time space and resources and the possibility of changes to structure and cultures. Headteachers recognised this self-fulfilling cycle and utilised it in a programme of ongoing improvement for every aspect of school life. Key to this process was hearing those different voices or different types of 'self' each student had at any given moment in time. This required students to be able to participate in student voice activity in different ways and for different purposes, and to have the power to do so in order to achieve potential gains. In effect how a headteacher drew upon power, purpose, participation and potential to manage student voice activity at any given point in time dictated how student voice could be heard or what 'self' was being heard and to some extent what student voice activity would follow. The contrast in descriptions or definitions of what student voice actually is and which voice is being heard and why, according to this study, is fundamentally tied into how a headteacher manages it – there is a symbioses between how it is managed and what it can be, and how it changes and grows and shifts which require new management and evolutions for its description.

These findings are important to headteachers because the 4P model provides a lens through which the management of student voice activity in a school can be examined. In addition they identify the role of student voice activity in improving all aspects of school life in five schools and the possibilities for future improvement, if managed in a way that encourages a self-fulfilling cycle. Practical lessons can be drawn from this study from the plethora of examples and the breadth and depth of student voice activity. Acknowledging the maturity of student voice activity in schools in this study – due to the sampling strategy – other headteachers and policy makers can use the findings of this study to see what is possible with student voice activity and to consider the implications for their own management practices. These findings are important to students because they acknowledge the channels, avenues, contexts, time, space, resources and change required to hear their voices in different ways that engender the evolving nature of student voice activity. Also they celebrate the vast possibilities of student voice activity and provide a conceptual framework for headteachers to draw upon in managing student voice activity.

The journey has been important to me because of the series of changes it has brought about in me. After many iterations of trying to formulate a management linked research proposal worthy of study, right through to the writing of this thesis, I have felt many changes. As a school improvement officer I took a very narrow view of what constitutes improvement in a school – that has broadened significantly with this journey. I now have a greater understanding of the differing voices of students and how that can be tapped into, and how harnessing them as a resource can be the catalyst for holistic improvement leading to performativity-linked improvement. I have also reconsidered my views on what constitutes worthwhile learning activities in a school context, particularly the role student voice activity can play in enriching and enhancing the curriculum and offering real-life problem solving experiences which have the potential to develop life long skills. I have expanded my understanding considerably in the field of student voice activity and the complexities of how it can be managed. Finally I got to work with five incredible professionals and an amazing tutor who together have helped me grow as a researcher. Therefore I judge it to have been a successful journey.

Peter Copcutt

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Appendices

Appendix 1

- 1.1 Expression of Interest**
- 1.2 Statement of Intent**
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Appendix 2

- 2.1 SEF Contrasting Exercise**
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- 2.3 Benefits Grid (Complete example)**
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Appendix 3

- 3.1 School One Transcript**
- 3.2 School Two Transcript**
- 3.3 School Three Transcript**
- 3.4 School Four Transcript**
- 3.5 School Five Transcript**

Appendix 1

Appendix 1.1 – Expression of Interest

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Dear Headteacher,

I am studying for a Doctorate of Education with the Open University. I am interested in how children and young people are involved in the decision making processes in schools. This vague area is sometimes called pupil consultation, pupil voice, student voice or students as researchers. I will use the term ‘student voice activity’.

I believe you have a number of activities in your school which come under the umbrella of ‘student voice activity’. In particular I am interested in how you lead and manage this area.

If you are interested in being part of this research or are curious and would like an informal chat please contact me (see below) to express your interest. I hope to work with a maximum of five schools.

Kind Regards

Peter Copcutt

Tel: 07595 350 454

Email: petercopcutt@hotmail.com

Appendix 1.2 – Statement of Intent

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Dear Headteacher,

Thank you for expression of interest in this research. I will require access to your school and you in particular during this research. All information collected will be confidential and will be managed in such a way that you, your school or anyone associated with it can not be identified.

You have the option of pulling out at any point and an assurance that all data will be destroyed if requested. You will also have the option of viewing the final report prior to submission.

Kind Regards

Peter Copcutt

Tel: 07595 350 454

Email: petercopcutt@hotmail.com

Appendix 1.3 – Proposed Research Schedule

PROPOSED RESEARCH SCHEDULE

Dear Headteacher,

I have chosen a case study research design and intend to take a cross-case comparison approach to answer my questions around how headteachers manage student voice activity in schools. That means I will investigate and write a report of student voice activity in your school. I will collate a group of reports from across a number of schools. I will then compare and contrast them to see if there are any commonalities or significant differences.

There will be a five step process: You will need to complete an initial questionnaire; from this I will then come to your school and conduct a semi-structured interview with you which will be digitally recorded and transcribed; you will then have the opportunity to check the transcript to ensure what has been recorded reflects what you meant; I will analyse it and present my interpretations to you and you can have a say on the findings.

Please find attached what I am calling a 'case study protocol'. This lists in detail the steps we will go through during this research. Many thanks for your time and help.

Kind Regards

Peter Copcutt

Tel: 07595 350 454

Email: petercopcutt@hotmail.com

Appendix 1.4 – Case Study Protocol

CASE STUDY PROTOCOL

Dear Headteacher,

This case study protocol details the justification for the research design, the research tools we will use and the order of use, and built in mechanisms to ensure this research complies with certain standards. It is detailed and specific and this is to ensure a robust approach. It is important at all stages that the protocol is complied with and that you are happy with the approach. At any point you may withdraw.

(A) An introduction to the Case Study and Purpose of Protocol

Ofsted, the UN, UK legislation and a number of other bodies direct schools to involve students in decisions which have an impact on their lives. In some contexts this directly linked to school improvement; in others it's enshrined in law; in other contexts it's extolled as good practice and in other contexts it's morally justified as a human need to be involved. Pressure groups, researchers and some headteachers champion this agenda also.

I will use the term 'student voice activity' to describe an entity which is loosely defined in many different ways. It has many names (and subtle differences) which include pupil consultation; pupils as researchers, pupil voice; children's rights; children's voice; student voice; learning communities; expert witnesses and emancipatory education.

The absence of an agreement on what student voice activity is or is not leads to an absence of management frameworks or standards for headteachers to draw upon in order to manage it. In the absence of an explicit framework to manage student voice activity headteachers must draw upon some implicit framework to help manage this entity. A multi-case study approach is best suited to investigate these phenomena. Your school will form an individual case.

(B) Data Collection Procedures

There is a five stage procedure required to collect the data need to answer the research questions: an initial questionnaire; a semi structured interview; a respondent validation exercise; an analysis and interpretation exercise; and finally a critical review of the draft report.

Initial Questionnaire

Firstly, an initial questionnaire has been designed; this will be emailed to you. It contains ten specific yes-no questions on whether certain student voice activity exists at your school. Where it does exist you will be asked to rate how beneficial that activity is for the students. You will then be asked to rate how beneficial the same activity is for the school. There will be a four point scale: 1= no benefit; 2 = beneficial; 3 = very beneficial; 4 = extremely beneficial. This is subjective and based entirely on your perceptions. Please return you completed questionnaire by email or post.

Semi structured interview

I will arrange a time to come into your school and conduct a semi structured interview. It should take approximately one and a half hours if we are not disrupted. I will use the initial questionnaire as a guide to structure the interview. I will repeat each question, in particular focusing on the ones where you have answered yes – that a certain student voice activity exists in your school. I will ask you to describe the activity and then ask to you elaborate on what your ratings for students and for the school. I will also ask you to expand upon these benefits. A digital recorder will be used to digitally record the semi structured interview. This will be transcribed and returned to you within one month.

Respondent validation exercise

You will be asked to read through the returned transcript and to carefully examine it. The purpose here is to ensure that each answer you gave accurately reflects your position. You will have the opportunity here to edit the transcript to ensure it more accurately reflects your position. This will form part of a validation exercise – to ensure the data recorded accurately describes the phenomena in question. This is an

important aspect of the research process. You will be given three months to complete this task.

Analysis and interpretation exercise

I will analyse your validated transcript. I will utilise methods including searching for patterns and pattern matching, and explanation building. Once complete I will return this analysed transcript to you. I will arrange a time to come to your school to discuss my analysis and interpretations. This may require a number of sessions or visits. The purpose here is to discuss my analysis and interpretations and compare that to your response. This again will help refine the analysis and interpretation process and ensure the data recorded and its analysis accurately reflects the phenomena it is describing. The aim will be to arrive at a single, agreed interpretation discounting all other possibilities. This validation exercise will strengthen the reliability of the interpretation of the data.

Critical review of draft report

I will use your validated interpretations of the analysis of your data to construct a draft report for your school. In this report I will refer to the initial research questions and present a detailed and vivid description of the data from your school and its relationship to the research questions. Once complete you will have the opportunity to review this draft report and request or suggest changes. There is one final stage where I will conduct a cross case comparison of data from all schools involved. The purpose here will be to see if any generalisations can be drawn from across the cases and whether validated data from one school can be used to validate data from other school – in effect a process of triangulation. You will get to review the final report I write. This will complete your role in the research process.

(C) Case Study Questions

This research aims to unearth the key factors involved in making decisions about student voice activity in schools. In particular it investigates the implicit frameworks headteachers draw upon in order to manage student voice activity with a view to drawing out that framework. Where possible it looks to establish the implications related to that framework. As nothing is being tested, nor is cause-and-effect being

determined, deductive questions and approaches have been rejected. An inductive approach will be utilised whereby the collection, interrogation and interpretation of data will help generate knowledge to answer the main research question. It is:

1. What implicit framework do headteachers draw upon for managing student voice activity?

It will also seek to identify elements within that framework and the role they play, and any attributes which make up those elements. In doing so there is scope to return to published literature and other studies to generate and refine further sub-research questions as part of this process. Therefore an iterative approach will be employed.

(D) Outline of Case Study Report

The case study report will contain the following chapters: introduction; a review of the current literature on student voice activity; a methodology section; a data collection section; a data analysis section; a findings section and a conclusion.

Once the cross case comparison has taken place – the process by which the data from each school is compared to each other, and cross referenced with each other – a vivid description of this analysis and interpretation will be included along with any themes or generalisations which can be drawn from across the cases. This will be used to answer the research question; in effect outlining the implicit role that headteachers draw upon to manage student voice activity. It will also be used to identify elements within that framework and the role they play, and any attributes which make up those elements.

Rejection of Case study Protocol

If this Case Study Protocol is disagreeable or you feel you cannot accept it or stick to it, this will jeopardise the validity and reliability of the overall findings. If this happens at any stage it will be in both parties interest to terminate our research and to destroy all data. I hope this is agreeable.

Kind Regards

Peter Copcutt

Tel: 07595 350 454

Email: petercopcutt@hotmail.com

Acceptance of Case Study Protocol

Please sign to indicate your acceptance to abide by and follow this Case Study Protocol:

Signed _____

Print _____

Date _____

Appendix 1.5 – Characteristics of Each School

	Type	Age Range	Approx Students
School 1	Primary	5 – 11	100
School 2	Secondary	11 – 18	1300
School 3	Primary	5 – 11	340
School 4	Junior	7 - 11	200
School 5	Primary	5 - 11	380

Appendix 2.1 – Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) Contrasting Exercise

Shorthand notes from SEF lists		Area this relates to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class council • School council • Pupil parliament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year Reps 	→ <i>Student councils</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership in Sports • Philosophy 4 Children • FSA financial training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBI Business training • Critical Thinking 	→ <i>Pupil Training</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment for Learning • Pupil-peer moderation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning journeys and skill tracks 	→ <i>AfL</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Schools Status 		→ <i>National Healthy School Status Award</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts Block • School meals contract • Building Schools for the Future • Staff applying the rules research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School rules • Swimming pool research • Equal school • Transport for London bike research 	→ <i>Students as Researchers</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddies • Transitional arrangements • Older/younger mentoring • Playground Friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lonely Stop • Friendship train • Reading buddies • School pen friends • Action Zone Pals 	→ <i>Peer Mentoring</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching interviews • Evaluation interviews • Teaching style interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What stops me learning exercises • Rate your teacher 	→ <i>Improving T&L</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Attitude to School & Self • CATS • Teaching interviews • Inclusion questionnaire • High Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention exit interview • Granada Learning attitude survey • Capita learning style questionnaire • Learning interviews 	→ <i>Data collection exercises/surveys/interviews</i>

questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year Group Teaching observations and comparisons • Playtime satisfaction survey 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic based target setting • Literacy target setting • Numeracy target setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science target setting • Life long learning targets 	→ <i>Pupils and target setting</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child link Governor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate Governor 	→ <i>Associate Governor Schemes</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community day • Interviewing candidates for a learning mentor post • Interviewing for deputy headteacher post • Behaviour targets • Student Enterprise Initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving school displays policy • Healthy Tuck Shop • Sports day • Corridor policy • Class tidiness ratings 	→ <i>Don't fit anywhere!</i>

Appendix 2.2 – Student Voice Activity (Questionnaire)

Student Voice Activity – Questionnaire

Name _____ **Position** _____ **School** _____

Please fill in this short questionnaire. Each question has a YES/NO answer. Where you answer YES please give a rating for how beneficial the activity is for (a) the students and (b) the school

1	2	3	4
No benefits	Beneficial	Very beneficial	Extremely beneficial

1. Does your school have a student council/pupil parliament?	YES	NO
---	------------	-----------

Rate this activity in terms of benefits for:

(a) Students				(b) School			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
<hr/>							

2. Does your school use any accredited training programmes for students?	YES	NO
---	------------	-----------

Rate this activity in terms of benefits for:

(a) Students				(b) School			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
<hr/>							

3. Does your school have an 'Assessment for Learning' programme?	YES	NO
---	------------	-----------

Rate this activity in terms of benefits for:

(a) Students				(b) School			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
<hr/>							

4. Does your school have 'Healthy Schools' status?	YES	NO
---	------------	-----------

Rate this activity in terms of benefits for:

(a) Students				(b) School			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
5. Do students conduct research on behalf of the school?				YES			
				NO			

Rate this activity in terms of benefits for:

(a) Students				(b) School			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
6. Does your school have any buddying systems/peer mentoring systems?				YES			
				NO			

Rate this activity in terms of benefits for:

(a) Students				(b) School			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
7. Does your school involve students in improving teaching?				YES			
				NO			

Rate this activity in terms of benefits for:

(a) Students				(b) School			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
8. Does your school conduct pupil surveys, questionnaires or interviews?				YES			
				NO			

Rate this activity in terms of benefits for:

(a) Students	(b) School
--------------	------------

1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	--	---	---	---	---

9. Does your school consult pupils on target setting?	YES	NO
---	-----	----

Rate this activity in terms of benefits for:

(a) Students				(b) School			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

10. Does your school have a student associate governor scheme?	YES	NO
--	-----	----

Rate this activity in terms of benefits for:

(a) Students				(b) School			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Please list any other student voice activities and benefits ratings in the box below:

These results will be used to form the basis of a semi-structured interview. For each activity where you have answered YES the interviewer will ask you to describe the benefits for students, in terms of process and outcome, and the benefits for the organisation, in terms of process and outcomes.

Thank you for filling in this questionnaire.

Appendix 2.3 – Benefits Grid (Complete example)

Summary of benefits and gains from School Five

	Student gains		Organisational gains	
	Evidence of how Students benefit from these processes	Evidence of how Students benefit from the outcomes	Evidence of how the organisation benefits from these processes	Evidence of how the organisation benefits from the outcomes
Student council/pupil parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- learning what a democratic process is- Rules that you have to abide by while you are on the school council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- interviewing and application form filling skills- Learning to distinguish between their own opinions or viewpoint and representing a group- minute taking		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- improved and enhanced playground- Structures as a result of student council lead research projects.
Accredited training	Activity doesn't exist			
'Assessment for			<ul style="list-style-type: none">- This activity is yet to show benefits as its only just begun	
Healthy Schools	Activity doesn't exist			

Students conduct research on behalf of the school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Five children surveyed children and adults re: school meals, why menu was poor, why there was hair in the dinners etc (survey designed by children) - working with adults (Cook, Governors, Head) - Soliciting and representing views of peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Findings given to new catering company with a view to them implementing requested changes - Children, head and a governor meet cook once a half term to look at complaints, issues, successes, the menus etc - Children have the opportunity to eat a healthy meal 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less complaints about lunches - increase in children changing from packed lunches to school dinners - increase in revenues from school dinners - children eating healthier meals
Buddying systems/peer mentoring systems?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children put themselves forwards as 'Playground Friends', they complete application forms and go for interviews (Interviewed by Assistant Head and Teaching Assistant) - Children were trained; they underwent what were the principles of a good playground friend, what the purpose was. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A friendship stop in the playground - Playground Friends wear bibs and are easily identifiable for every break - They have an impact as reported by children to staff - In recent surveys, some of the children said they found the playground very, very difficult but they all mentioned Playground Friends had been there when they needed them 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction in number of negative playground incidents

			- Linked into local secondary school; they do peer reading with younger children and they've trained some of the children in peer mentoring	- School gains additional resources
Involve Students in improving teaching?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Six children from each class are surveyed each term. (Survey devised by external adults as part of the Local Authority intensified support programme) - Children rate lessons out of ten, information collected and feed back to teachers and senior management team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers supported in changing own practice to better suit learning needs of current class - Children learn in a style that suits them - conducive learning environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey information feed back to staff through INSET programme, staff tasked with making changes to improve conditions for learning 	
Conduct pupil surveys, questionnaires or interviews?	- Children answer 50 question survey regarding attitudes towards themselves an school		- School taps into a source of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School receives a profile of the 'learner climate' (a reflection of its ethos) - Pupil level data indicating which children feel the school isn't meeting their needs
	- Selected children surveyed regarding teaching and learning		- School taps into a source of information	
	- Children surveyed about friendship groups; who they socialise with, who they		- School taps into a source of information	- School targets pastoral support at those who have difficulties in developing and

	don't			maintaining social relationships
	- Children interviewed for a variety of purposes		- School taps into a source of information	
Consult pupils on target setting?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children select their MUST target, their SHOULD target and COULD target in the core subjects - Children communicate their targets to adults 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members of staff learn where children are pitching themselves, whether they are underestimating, overestimating or able to judge effectively what they can achieve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children working towards collective targets which relate to those set in partnership with the Local Authority - Children and staff involved in the improvement process
Associate Governor	Activity doesn't exist			
Other Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children involved in interviewing new learning mentor - Children had to collect appropriate questions from classes and work out the best ones to ask 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey and interview skills - Knowledge and understanding of HR processes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New member of staff whose appointment has been validated by pupils

Appendix 2.4 – Raw Transcript (Partial example)

INTERVIEW: Headteacher – School Five

Key:

I = Interviewer

R = Respondent

[Raw]

INTRODUCTION:

***** PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT *****

START OF INTERVIEW

I Question 1 – Does your school have a Student Council or a Pupil Parliament – you said yes and you said it was very beneficial for the students and very beneficial for the school. Can you tell me a bit about your student council or pupil parliament?

R Yes we have a school council. It's made up of one representative from each class and children from you know year two to year six, so it's all ten children in total. They put themselves forward so. They fill in a short application form and go to interview to get on to the council that way and they sit on the council for one and a half terms. They'll each get to take part in five meetings. They set the agenda for the meetings and I always put something on.

I Who interviews them and decides on who will be on the council?

R Me and ##### (Assistant Headteacher) who facilitates the meetings and ensures things are set you know for the children. Three council members also attend. We have questions and we each have a vote. We rate each candidate and then you know vote on which one should go on the council. It's my job you know of passing on the bad news to the ones who are not successful!

I * CONTINUED *****

Appendix 2.5 – Respondent Validated Transcript (Partial example)

INTERVIEW: Headteacher – School Five

Key:

I = Interviewer

R = Respondent

[VALIDATED BY HEADTEACHER]

INTRODUCTION:

***** PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT *****

START OF INTERVIEW

I Question 1 – Does your school have a Student Council or a Pupil Parliament – you said yes and you said it was very beneficial for the students and very beneficial for the school. Can you tell me a bit about your student council or pupil parliament?

R We have a school council. It's made up of one representative from each class and children from year two to year six, so it's ten children in total. They put themselves forward. Children have to fill in a short application form and go to interview to get on the council and they sit on the council for one and a half terms. It means they'll each get to take part in five meetings. They set the agenda for the meetings and I always put one item on the agenda.

I Who interviews them and decides on who will be on the council?

R I interview them along with the Assistant Headteacher who facilitates the meetings and ensures things are set at a suitable level. Three school council members also attend interviews. We have a set of standard questions and we each have a vote. We rate each candidate and then vote on which one should go on the council. I have the job of passing on the bad news to the candidates who are not successful!

I * CONTINUED *****

Appendix 2.6 – Transcript Highlighted Quotes (Partial example)

INTERVIEW: Headteacher – School Five

Key:

I = Interviewer

R = Respondent

Highlighted quote

INTRODUCTION:

***** PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT *****

START OF INTERVIEW

I Question 1 – Does your school have a Student Council or a Pupil Parliament – you said yes and you said it was very beneficial for the students and very beneficial for the school. Can you tell me a bit about your student council or pupil parliament?

R QUOTE 1 → We have a school council.
QUOTE 2 → It's made up of one representative from each class and children from year two to year six,
QUOTE 3 → so it's ten children in total.
QUOTE 4 → They put themselves forward.
QUOTE 5 → Children have to fill in a short application form and go to interview to get on the council and they sit on the council for one and a half terms. It means they'll each get to take part in five meetings.
QUOTE 6 → They set the agenda for the meetings and I always put one item on the agenda.

I Who interviews them and decides on who will be on the council?

***** CONTINUED *****

Appendix 2.7 – Validated Primary Analysis (Partial example)

INTERVIEW: Headteacher – School Five

Key:

I = Interviewer

R = Respondent

Highlighted quote

Primary analysis (PC) → Please review my comments and approve or add/edit/delete

INTRODUCTION:

***** PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT *****

START OF INTERVIEW

I Question 1 – Does your school have a Student Council or a Pupil Parliament – you said yes and you said it was very beneficial for the students and very beneficial for the school. Can you tell me a bit about your student council or pupil parliament?

R QUOTE 1 → We have a school council.
→ School council exists (so what?...What does it tell us?...Is this worth highlighting?)

QUOTE 2 → It's made up of one representative from each class and children from year two to year six,

→ Participation from across the age ranges

QUOTE 3 → so it's ten children in total.
→ 10 out of how many...is this important?

QUOTE 4 → They put themselves forward.

→ They choose to take part

QUOTE 5 → Children have to fill in a short application form and go to interview to get on the council and they sit on the council for one and a half terms. It means they'll each get to take part in five meetings.

→ Who teaches them how to do this?

QUOTE 6 → They set the agenda for the meetings and I always put one item on the agenda.

→ Students appear to have control although Headteacher can initiate something

I

*** **CONTINUED** ***

Appendix 2.8 – Patterns/Categories and Incidents (Partial example)

INTERVIEW: Headteacher – School Five

Key:

I = Interviewer

R = Respondent

Highlighted quote

Primary analysis (Complete/Accepted)

Emerging Categories

Power = 12 incidents

Purpose = 20 incidents

Participation 15 = incidents

Potential = 24 incidents

INTRODUCTION:

***** PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT *****

START OF INTERVIEW

I **Question 1** – Does your school have a Student Council or a Pupil Parliament – you said yes and you said it was very beneficial for the students and very beneficial for the school. Can you tell me a bit about your student council or pupil parliament?

R We have a school council. **QUOTE 1** → It's made up of one representative from each class and children from year two to year six,

→ Participation from across the age ranges, does this give voice-equity for each year group?

so it's ten children in total. **QUOTE 2** → They put themselves forward.

→ Participation not forced, student chooses to partake

Children have to fill in a short application form and go to interview to get on the council and they sit on the council for one and a half terms. It means they'll each get to take part in five meetings. **QUOTE 3** → They set the agenda for the meetings and I always put one item on the agenda.

→ Students appear to have control although Headteacher can exercise power; initiating something

I Who interviews them and decides on who will be on the council?

R **QUOTE 4** → I interview them along with the Assistant Headteacher who facilitates the meetings and ensures things are set at a suitable level. Three school council members also attend interviews.

→ Students participate with accessibility ensured through school resource

We have a set of standard questions and **QUOTE 5** → we each have a vote. We rate each candidate and then vote on which one should go on the council.

→ Power is being exercised by students and adults, they share ownership.

I have the job of passing on the bad news to the candidates who are not successful!

*** CONTINUED ***

Appendix 2.9 – Cross Case Comparison (Partial example)

INTERVIEW: Headteacher – School Five

Key:

I = Interviewer

R = Respondent

Highlighted quote

Primary analysis (Complete/Accepted)

Emerging Categories	Power = 12 incidents
	Purpose = 20 incidents
	Participation 15 = incidents
	Potential = 24 incidents

Sub Categories

Power	Initiation = 3 incident
	Control = 4 incidents
	Ownership = 4 incidents
	Termination = 1 incident
Purpose	<u>Tenet</u> = 3 incidents
	<u>Intent</u> = 5 incidents
	<u>Experience</u> = 2 incidents
	<u>Outcome</u> = 10 incidents
Participation	<u>Accessibility</u> = 2 incidents
	<u>Choice</u> = 4 incidents
	<u>Equitableness</u> = 9 incidents
Potential	<u>Agency</u> = 9 incidents
	<u>Belonging</u> = 9 incidents
	<u>Competences</u> = 6 incidents

INTRODUCTION:

***** PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT *****

START OF INTERVIEW

I Question 1 – Does your school have a Student Council or a Pupil Parliament – you said yes and you said it was very beneficial for the students and very beneficial for the school. Can you tell me a bit about your student council or pupil parliament?

R We have a school council. **QUOTE 1** → It's made up of one representative from each class and children from year two to year six,

→ Participation from across the age ranges, does this give voice-equity for each year group?

so it's ten children in total. **QUOTE 2** → They put themselves forward.

→ Participation not forced, student chooses to partake

Children have to fill in a short application form and go to interview to get on the council and they sit on the council for one and a half terms. It means they'll each get to take part in five meetings. **QUOTE 3** → They set the agenda for the meetings and I always put one item on the agenda.

→ Students appear to have control although Headteacher can exercise power; initiating something

I Who interviews them and decides on who will be on the council?

R **QUOTE 4** → I interview them along with the Assistant Headteacher who facilitates the meetings and ensures things are set at a suitable level. Three school council members also attend interviews.

→ Students participate with accessibility ensured through school resource

We have a set of standard questions and **QUOTE 5** → we each have a vote. We rate each candidate and then vote on which one should go on the council.

→ Power is being exercised by students and adults, they share ownership.

I have the job of passing on the bad news to the candidates who are not successful!

I

*** CONTINUED ***

Appendix 3.1 Extract from School One Transcript

<p>INTRODUCTION:</p> <p>I Thank you for taking part in this interview.</p> <p>R I'm going to record everything we say on this digital recorder and have it transcribed. You will have an opportunity to review the transcript and to make changes to ensure what has been written accurately captures what you want to say.</p> <p>I Everything I use from here will be anonymised; there will be no way to identify or recognise you or your school from the transcript.</p> <p>R When complete I will analyse the transcript, make notes on my interpretations and look for themes and patterns. I will return it to you once again to check it to ensure you are happy with my interpretations, themes and codes.</p> <p>I I'm going to use the initial questionnaire you completed. I will work through each of the ten questions asking you to expand upon your answer. In particular I will be looking for reasons why you have rated the benefit associated with each question the way you have. I will also try and get you to distinguish between benefits in terms of going through the process and the outcomes achieved with respect to the students. I will also ask you to do the same for the school.</p>	
<p>START OF INTERVIEW</p> <p>I Question 1 – Does your school have a Student Council or a Pupil Parliament – you said yes and you said it was extremely beneficial for the students and very beneficial for the school. What it does do: I mean what it's all about?</p>	
<p>R Yes we've had a school council for a couple of years now, we call it a student council.</p>	
<p>I And what does your school council do?</p>	
<p>R It's involved in all aspects of school life, oh now there are too many things to go into to explain just how they actually do.</p>	

<p>INTERVIEW: Headteacher – School One</p> <p>Key:</p> <p>I = Interviewer</p> <p>R = Respondent</p> <p>Highlighted quote</p> <p>Primary analysis (Complete Accepted)</p> <p>Emerging Categories</p> <p>P Power = 19 incidents</p> <p>Purpose = 27 incidents</p> <p>Participation 13 = incidents</p> <p>Potential = 9 incidents</p> <p>Sub Categories:</p> <p>Power</p> <p>Initiation = 7 incidents</p> <p>Control = 5 incidents</p> <p>Ownership = 4 incidents</p> <p>Termination = 3 incidents</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>Found = 3 incidents</p> <p>Identified = 7 incidents</p> <p>Experienced = 5 incidents</p> <p>Outcomes = 12 incidents</p> <p>Participation</p> <p>Accessibility = 3 incidents</p> <p>Choice = 6 incidents</p> <p>Equilibrium = 2 incidents</p> <p>Potential</p> <p>Unrealised = 3 incidents</p> <p>Unrealised = 3 incidents</p> <p>Unrealised = 3 incidents</p>	
--	--

I	Okay how about trying to encapsulate why it's extremely beneficial instead?
R	QUOTE 1 → It's beneficial because it gives them the opportunity to be involved in democratic processes in fun and exciting ways. → It's purposeful is to promote democratic learning with fun. It has a purpose
I	And why is that important. I mean what's beneath that?
R	Well, 2 → What is it we really want for them – well it's about involving them in democratic processes, it's part of active citizenship and skills they will need later in life. It's about involving them in things that are important to them and at a level that's suitable to them. Anything we design or they design principally has to benefit them. It'll also benefit the school well then that's a bonus too. → The purpose here is to serve the pupils and great if the school benefit is too. 3 is pupil-orientated So that's why I said school council is extremely beneficial for the children and very beneficial for the school.
I	That sounds very altruistic!
R	Well you may judge it so but I think it's more meaningful than that. I mean it's a lot deeper than just it's great for the kids; it's got to be real to you know. So like for example, 3 → School council present to it and we discuss what they want to do. I always ask what difference are they trying to make so that we're all clear that every activity has a purpose. → The 4 here is that each activity has a purpose that is understood at the outset
	QUOTE 4 → So you see it's more purposeful than just being altruistic. We put a lot of thought and effort into what we do before doing it.

	→ Is 5 bigger than a rule? It has a purpose
I	So give me a bit more detail about the practicalities I mean what actually happens, how does the school council meet?
R	We have one meeting a month. 5 → My deputy facilitates the meetings but all that's about is equal access, making sure every child can take part in the meetings and feel like they're involved. → Student is participating at a level suitable to them, others being given support to 6 this activity QUOTE 6 → Some find it more difficult than others, you know sometimes it's ability related, other times it's about personalities so my deputy is there to make sure things run smoothly. → Student's participate with 7 enabled through school resource
I	Sounds good, so what do they talk about; who decides what goes on...is it you?
R	No, no, no, you're missing the point. 7 → The children decide the agenda and there's one item per year group so the school council rep in each class will be responsible for one item. These are decided at class level and we have a set of agreed processes for how that happens. → Power being exercised here by students who 8 the agenda QUOTE 8 → So one thing which was causing a problem was the school rules so school council started some work on improving the school rules. In the end we got a good set of rules out of that and everybody seems to be able to grasp them. → Power being exercised here maybe by the both to 9 student voice activity about rules.

Appendix 3.2 Extract from School Two Transcript

<p>INTRODUCTION:</p> <p>I Thank you for taking part in this interview.</p> <p>I'm going to record everything we say on this digital recorder and have it transcribed. You will have an opportunity to review the transcript and to make changes to ensure what has been written accurately captures what you want to say.</p> <p>R Everything I use from here will be anonymised; there will be no way to identify or recognise you or your school from the transcript.</p> <p>When complete I will analyse the transcript, make notes on my interpretations and look for themes and patterns. I will return it to you once again to check it to ensure you are happy with my interpretations, themes and codes.</p> <p>I'm going to use the initial questionnaire you completed. I will work through each of the ten questions asking you to expand upon your answer. In particular I will be looking for reasons why you have rated the benefit associated with each question the way you have. I will also try and get you to distinguish between benefits in terms of going through the process and the outcomes achieved with respect to the students. I will also ask you to do the same for the school.</p>	
<p>START OF INTERVIEW</p> <p>I Question 1 – Does your school have a Student Council or a Pupil Parliament – you said yes and you said it was extremely beneficial for the students and extremely beneficial for the school. I'm going to try and break down your questionnaire answers to work out what pupils have gained from experiencing a process and the outcome of a student voice activity and then do the same from the school perspective. So firstly your pupil parliament, what is it?</p> <p>R QUOTE 1 → At this school we have a pupil parliament, which has been in existence for a number of years. Its primary goal is to bring the voices of our pupils into the school improvement process.</p>	

<p>INTERVIEW: Header – School Two</p> <p>Key:</p> <p>I = Interviewer</p> <p>R = Respondent</p> <p>Highlighted quote</p> <p>Primary analysis (Complete Accepted)</p> <p>Emerging Categories</p> <p>Purpose = 20 incidents</p> <p>Purpose = 35 incidents</p> <p>Participation = 10 incidents</p> <p>Potential = 15 incidents</p> <p>Sub Categories</p> <p>Potential</p> <p>Initiation = 3 incidents</p> <p>Control = 4 incidents</p> <p>Ownership = 12 incidents</p> <p>Termination = 1 incident</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>Plan = 9 incidents</p> <p>Initiate = 5 incidents</p> <p>Experience = 5 incidents</p> <p>Outcome = 12 incidents</p> <p>Participation</p> <p>Accountability = 2 incidents</p> <p>Choice = 4 incidents</p> <p>Equilibrium = 4 incidents</p> <p>Potential</p> <p>Control = 2 incidents</p> <p>Ownership = 5 incidents</p> <p>Termination = 11 incidents</p>	
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	<p>→ Whose purpose does student voice activity serve. The intail is student focused.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>QUOTE 2 → It has touched upon every aspect of improvement in its life and is now a well established entity in the institution. It is made up from a cross section of pupils from across the age range including the sixth form.</p> <p>→ Students participate from across the school – does this ensure voice tailor?</p>
I	<p>Okay, good, so let's get into the finer details, what would I see in this pupil parliament, I mean can you describe its inner workings so that I'm a bit clearer on why it's so beneficial?</p>
R	<p>QUOTE 3 → There are representatives from every form group across the school who meet once a month.</p> <p>→ Students participate from across the school – does this ensure voice tailor?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>QUOTE 4 → It runs like you would expect an adult-orientated meeting; chair, vice-chair, minute taker, agenda items, matters arising, any other business, votes and actions.</p> <p>→ Potential for students developing skills and competence</p> <p>.....</p> <p>QUOTE 5 → There is an adult observer, usually one of my assistant headteachers who helps to facilitate the meetings, ensures there's no problems or interference from other members of staff, and ensures those with challenges are able to access the proceedings without barriers.</p>

	<p>→ Resources to facilitate tailor and support to help all students participate</p>
I	<p>Interference from staff, what does that mean?</p>
R	<p>QUOTE 6 → A school is a busy, frenetic environment and the opportunity to catch a pupil for a quick chat or to perform a quick task is ever present. The assistant headteacher ensures that any requests of this nature are dealt with.</p> <p>→ The AHT limits the scope of adult interference, they ensure this on behalf of the pupils so they are exercising power on behalf of the students.</p>
I	<p>Sorry why, why is that important, I don't think I get it?</p>
R	<p>QUOTE 7 → The Pupil Parliament is a decision making body in its own right and is protected as far as possible from the interference or the overt or covert influence of the staff body.</p> <p>→ The pupil parliament serves the purpose of the students, its tailor is student focused.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>QUOTE 8 → If we truly want to hear the voice of pupils, the real voice, we have to provide opportunities and protect them from outside influence. It is this true voice which has the power to drastically change and improve things for the pupils, and as a consequence improve the school too.</p> <p>→ Desire to ensure full participation from all pupils, the tailor of student voice</p>
I	<p>Okay I'm more clear, it sounds very impressive, what have they actually achieved, what's tangible?</p>

Appendix 3.3 Extract from School Three Transcript

<p>INTERVIEW: Headteacher – School Three</p> <p>Key:</p> <p>I = Interviewer</p> <p>R = Respondent</p> <p>Highlighted quote</p> <p>Primary analysis (Complete Accepted)</p> <p>Emerging Categories</p> <p>Power = 12 incidents</p> <p>Purpose = 20 incidents</p> <p>Participation 12 = incidents</p> <p>Potential = 18 incidents</p> <p>Sub Categories:</p> <p>Power</p> <p>Initiation = 2 incident</p> <p>Control = 6 incidents</p> <p>Overship = 1 incidents</p> <p>Termination = 2 incident</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>Tenue = 7 incidents</p> <p>Intend = 3 incidents</p> <p>Experience = 3 incidents</p> <p>Outcome = 7 incidents</p> <p>Participation</p> <p>Accessibility = 3 incidents</p> <p>Choice = 2 incident</p> <p>Equilibrium = 7 incidents</p> <p>Potential</p> <p>Access = 5 incidents</p> <p>to participate = 7 incidents</p> <p>to participate = 5 incidents</p>	
<p>INTRODUCTION:</p> <p>Thank you for taking part in this interview.</p> <p>I'm going to record everything we say on this digital recorder and have it transcribed. You will have an opportunity to review the transcript and to make changes to ensure what has been written accurately captures what you want to say.</p> <p>Everything I use from here will be anonymised; there will be no way to identify or recognise you or your school from the transcript.</p> <p>When complete I will analyse the transcript, make notes on my interpretations and look for themes and patterns. I will return it to you once again to check it to ensure you are happy with my interpretations, themes and codes.</p> <p>I'm going to use the initial questionnaire you completed. I will work through each of the ten questions asking you to expand upon your answer. In particular I will be looking for reasons why you have rated the benefit associated with each question the way you have. I will also try and get you to distinguish between benefits in terms of going through the process and the outcomes achieved with respect to the students. I will also ask you to do the same for the school.</p>	
<p>START OF INTERVIEW</p> <p>I</p> <p>Question 1 – Does your school have a student council or pupil parliament? You said yes, and for students you've said it's beneficial and for the school you've also said it's beneficial. So what I want you to do is to just talk a little bit about what your student council is or what it does...</p> <p>R</p> <p>QUOTE 1 → Right, the school council meets once a week with the class teacher. They meet before school; it's composed of year 6 pupils who represent each year group.</p> <p>→ Only year 6 allowed to participate, this activity is not accessible to everyone</p> <p>.....</p> <p>QUOTE 2 → To become a school councillor you have to</p>	

<p>respond to an advertisement that goes up at the beginning of the year, you have to complete an application form with a supporting statement as to why you think you'd be a good school councillor, and then you're interviewed by the head teacher – myself, and if a deputy. So it's taken extremely seriously. The school councillors are high profile in the school, they've got a badge, they would be our ambassadors for spreading visitors around the school, they sit at the front of the assembly with the head teacher or whoever is taking the assembly.</p> <p>→ Potential of developing new skills and competences through participation and planning process</p>	
I	It sounds serious.
R	<p>QUOTE 3 → Yes, it's a real high status position. When they meet they have their own agenda but sometimes I give them things that I want them to look into or issues may have come up as a result of problems in the playground, in the classroom.</p> <p>→ Power appears to be shared between student's setting the agenda and teachers adding to the agenda, but children are the main power owners. Headteacher can't ignore it.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>etc etc or there's that we're doing in school. QUOTE 4 → So they meet and have their agenda with the teacher, they write minutes, and then they go back to the class that they represent and they feed back. So that's how they meet.</p> <p>→ Potential for some year 6 children to experience new skills and competences</p>
I	Great, so in terms of benefits for pupils, those are either part of the council or maybe those who get some feedback, what do they gain from these processes?
R	<p>QUOTE 5 → If they can't see the activity making a difference or changing things then they're not likely to do it, but these activities come from us. The ones they design always have a purpose because it comes from them and their intention is usually to change things. They have to believe they can change things.</p> <p>→ The potential of students is purposeful activity that makes change happen.</p>

<p>That's what they gain from being part, that's the benefit to them.</p>	
I	And the outcomes?
R	<p>I think first of all QUOTE 6 → It's a slightly visible way that all the children in the school feel as though they are being listened to. It belongs to them. The school belongs to them and they belong to this school.</p> <p>→ Students being listened to and feeling like the school belongs to them – potential</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Secondly, on a number of occasions, QUOTE 7 → Issues that they have raised, have become semi high profile and have become a whole school discussion point or focal point that we've developed. So we're proving to them that we're listening to them and valuing their opinion.</p> <p>→ Potential for students as they're being listened to; their sense of belonging</p> <p>.....</p> <p>QUOTE 8 → For the school councillors themselves there's a huge amount of status from getting that position. The process that they go through is a mini version of a life-long skill that they will need to develop.</p> <p>→ Potential for new competences with students developing the long skills</p>
I	In terms of jobs and things like that?
R	<p>Absolutely. As they get older. And for the other children they're aspiring to that role. QUOTE 9 → I think it really is a very good avenue for the children to feel that they are being listened to, and that's our second most important way of getting the children's voice heard.</p> <p>→ Potential for student to develop a sense of belonging as they're being listened to.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>That's why I've only put that it's beneficial. And also it's beneficial, rather than very beneficial, because QUOTE 10 → There</p>

Appendix 3.4 Extract from School Four Transcript

INTRODUCTION: <i>Thank you for taking part in this interview.</i> <i>I'm going to record everything we say on this digital recorder and have it transcribed. You will have an opportunity to review the transcript and to make changes to ensure what has been written accurately captures what you want to say.</i> <i>Everything I use from here will be anonymised; there will be no way to identify or recognise you or your school from the transcript.</i> <i>When complete I will analyse the transcript, make notes on my interpretations and look for themes and patterns. I will return it to you once again to check it to ensure you are happy with my interpretations, themes and codes.</i> <i>I'm going to use the initial questionnaire you completed. I will work through each of the ten questions asking you to expand upon your answer. In particular I will be looking for reasons why you have rated the benefit associated with each question the way you have. I will also try and get you to distinguish between benefits in terms of going through the process and the outcomes achieved with respect to the students. I will also ask you to do the same for the school.</i>	
START OF INTERVIEW	
I	Question 1 – Does your school have a Student Council or a Pupil Parliament? You said, Yes. You said it's a very beneficial for the students?
R	Yes
I	So let's look at the two things in terms of the process first of all and then the outcome. The process, what kind of things do they do on a student council. What do the students experience on a student council?
R	1 → Well what things do the councillors experience;

INTERVIEW: Headteacher – BN	
Key	
I = Interviewer	
R = Respondent	
Highlighted quote	
Primary analysis (Complete Accepted)	
Emerging Categories Power = 18 incidents	
Purpose = 19 incidents	
Participation 12 = incidents	
Potential = 13 incidents	
Sub Categories:	
Power	
Initiation = 6 incidents	
Control = 5 incidents	
Ownership = 5 incidents	
Termination = 2 incidents	
Purpose	
Intent = 5 incidents	
Potential = 3 incidents	
Experience = 5 incidents	
Outcome = 6 incidents	
Participation	
Accessibility = 4 incidents	
Choice = 4 incidents	
Equitableness = 4 incidents	
Potential	
Influence = 4 incidents	
Self-empowerment = 2 incidents	
Empowerment/empowering = 7 incidents	

<p>first, you'd probably be learning what a democratic process is. Because there are certain rules that you have to abide to while you are in a School Council. What is it. What does a Chair do? So, understanding the roles and responsibilities if you are in a position within the School Council. Rather than just being a School Councilor. And then understanding what it means to be a School Councilor, so it's not just about your opinion, or your viewpoint but actually you are representing your class. So it's purposeful for all those who get to be councilors</p> <p>→ * Purposeful for those who take part as they get to go through a whole range of experiences which they gain from</p> <p>→ * Potential for students to develop skills and competences</p> <p>* Cross reference of 2 b6</p>	<p>I Right. So there are a number of skills there, okay, what else?</p>
<p>R We! QUOTE 2 → for our school council there is a teacher present who is the facilitator. Her responsibility is to ensure that everybody in the school council abides by its rules and can access what's on the agenda</p> <p>→ Teacher there to ensure participation so that students can participate</p> <p>.....</p> <p>and QUOTE 3 → they are not just giving their opinion but representing their constituency and representing the views of those in your class so that's a big thing. For some younger children it is quite difficult for them to understand that</p> <p>→ Are Year 3 participating in such a way that the voice is accurate and authentic are they demonstrating voice well...</p>	<p>I So those skills and competencies you don't get those overnight do you, is that something that you help develop?</p>

<p>R Yeah. And, and then the other thing is the issues that they discuss. QUOTE 4 → Inevitably they bring up certain issues and I am very happy to say that we have moved away from "a good lot". They did raise that as a big thing and that's been done and they are happy with the state of affairs there, that that change happened because of them.</p> <p>→ Students changing things that matter to them, potential for developing sense of agency</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>QUOTE 5 → But they have raised other issues and one of the things is always to do with the playground and that's the next big thing I think in a child's world. So they know they can raise things.</p> <p>→ Students raised the playground as issue and have the power to raise other issues so they can change things.</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>So I think QUOTE 6 → one of the things about being in a school council is it's their forum - they can raise what they want to. They start the ball rolling.</p> <p>→ Students have the power to raise issues, to start things off.</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>They have the opportunity of meeting the Chair and Vice-Chair, QUOTE 7 → the opportunity of meeting with me and raising their concerns. We discuss issues and then we identify and prioritise in that way. So that's always a good experience.</p> <p>→ The experience is purposeful</p>
<p>I So the power in this situation lies with the students, it is not contrived at all?</p>	

Appendix 3.5 Extract from School Five Transcript

INTRODUCTION: Thank you for taking part in this interview. I'm going to record everything we say on this digital recorder and have it transcribed. You will have an opportunity to review the transcript and to make changes to ensure what has been written accurately captures what you want to say. Everything I use from here will be anonymised: there will be no way to identify or recognise you or your school from the transcript. When complete I will analyse the transcript, make notes on my interpretations and look for themes and patterns. I will return it to you once again to check it to ensure you are happy with my interpretations, themes and codes. I'm going to use the initial questionnaire you completed. I will work through each of the ten questions asking you to expand upon your answer. In particular I will be looking for reasons why you have rated the benefit associated with each question the way you have. I will also try and get you to distinguish between benefits in terms of going through the process and the outcomes achieved with respect to the students. I will also ask you to do the same for the school.	
START OF INTERVIEW	
I	Question 1 – Does your school have a Student Council or a Pupil Parliament – you said yes and you said it was very beneficial for the students and very beneficial for the school. Can you tell me a bit about your student council or pupil parliament?
R	We have a school council. QUOTE 1 → It's made up of one representative from each class and children from year two to year six. → Participation from across the age ranges. Does it solve vocab-

INTERVIEW: Headteacher – School Five	
Key:	
I = Interviewer	
R = Respondent	
Highlighted quote	
Primary analysis (Complete Accepted)	
Emerging Categories:	Power Initiation = 22 incidents Purpose = 20 incidents Participation = 15 incidents Potential = 24 incidents
Sub Categories:	Power Initiation = 3 incidents Control = 4 incidents Ownership = 4 incidents Termination = 1 incident Purpose Planed = 3 incidents Intend = 3 incidents Experiences = 2 incidents Outcomes = 10 incidents Participation Accessibility = 2 incidents Choice = 4 incidents Equilibrium = 9 incidents Potential [redacted] = 9 incidents [redacted] = 9 incidents [redacted] = 6 incidents

<p>.....</p> <p>QUOTE 1 For each year group?</p> <p>so it's ten children in total. QUOTE 2 → They put themselves forward.</p> <p>→ Participation not forced, student QUOTE 3 to participate</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Children have to fill in a short application form and go to interview to get on the council and they sit on the council for one and a half terms. It means they'll each get to take part in five meetings.</p> <p>QUOTE 3 → They set the agenda for the meetings and I always put one item on the agenda.</p> <p>→ Children appear to have control although Headteacher can exercise power.</p>	<p>I Who interviews them and decides on who will be on the council?</p> <p>R QUOTE 4 → Interview them along with the Assistant Headteacher who facilitates the meetings and ensures things are set at a suitable level. Three school council members also attend interviews.</p> <p>→ Students participate with Headteacher ensured through school resource</p> <p>.....</p> <p>We have a set of standard questions and QUOTE 5 → We each have a vote. We rate each candidate and then vote on which one should go on the council.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>→ Power is being exercised by students and adults, they share</p>
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<p>.....</p> <p>I have the job of passing on the bad news to the candidates who are not successful!</p> <p>I So let's look at what students gain from the processes of being a school councillor, then separately I want to talk about what all students gain as outcomes from the student council.</p> <p>R Well vital things do they experience? QUOTE 6 → First would be learning what a democratic process is. Also because there are certain rules that you have to follow while you are on the school council. They learn what does a chair does, they learn about holding meetings and taking minutes. They learn about debating and they develop an understanding of their roles and responsibilities. So they learn to distinguish between their own opinions or your viewpoint and the viewpoint of your class. They learn about voting and they learn about compromise.</p> <p>→ Potential for students to gain things including new skills and competences</p> <p>.....</p> <p>QUOTE 7 → For years two and three it can be difficult so the Assistant Headteacher facilitates meetings and ensures they can participate at a level suitable to them.</p> <p>→ Resources to facilitate participation and support to help younger students participate</p>	<p>I So there are a number of skills being developed as part of the process. What do students gain as an outcome of having a school council?</p> <p>R On lots of things. QUOTE 8 → We try to ensure that anything they do has a purpose, so it has the potential to change things</p> <p>→ Is just do is to change things, so it has a purpose</p>
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